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Problems of Youth

by Louis Albert Banks



CORRECTION, PROCEEDINGS 1926, VOL. II.

Page 939, Thomas Hawksley Lecture, Appendix B. Item 23
should read thus:—

“The Strain Energy-Function and the Elastic Limit,” by
B. P. Haigh, British Association Reports, 1919 and 1921. See
also *Engineering*, Vol. CXIX, 1920 pages 158-160.

Banks

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112

THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEMES
FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

BY

REV. LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D.D.

Pastor of Trinity M. E. Church, Denver, Colorado

AUTHOR OF

"Hero Tales from Sacred Story," "My Young Man," "Sermon
Stories for Boys and Girls," "The Christian Gentleman,"
etc., etc.

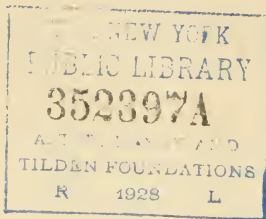


FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1909

17.50



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Printed in the United States of America

Published, October, 1909

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THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

THE FIRST STONE IN THE STAIRWAY OF A NOBLE CAREER

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”—Prov. 1: 7.

AMMI, an Indian sage, took a seed one day and cut it in two. Then turning to his son he asked, “What do you see, my child?” “A seed, father,” was the reply. “And what do you see in the seed?” “A small speck,” was the answer. “And what do you see in the speck?” “Nothing,” said his son. “Ah, where you see nothing, I see a great tree,” replied the father.

The difference in men, after all, is the difference in what they see. Where some see only a stone, others read the history of the world; where one man beholds nothing but a bush touched with the red glow of the setting sun, another sees heavenly flames and hears the voice of the Almighty.

The fear of the Lord, which is above all an abiding and reverent sense of the presence of God in His world, is the first stone in the stairway which leads to all true conception of the world. No man ever lived in such reverent and loving attitude to God as Jesus Christ, and no man ever saw so much in the world as He. As Samuel Horton says, Christ saw the whole design of God's providence worked out in the petals of a lily. He picked up a sermon hanging on a sparrow's beak. He read in the germ lying at the heart of a mustard-seed the whole history of the kingdom of heaven. He looked on that little band of fishermen who left their nets to follow at His call and beheld all the missionary heroes of the world. He saw in the cross on which He was to die a great spiritual magnet, and exclaimed, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

Lyman Abbott says that reverence is the alphabet of religion. As you can not acquire knowledge without the knowledge of the alphabet, so you can not acquire anything of the religious life without the spirit of reverence. Self-conceit is precisely the negative of reverence. It is the absence of that spirit which looks up to anything that lies above us.

Self-conceit is fatal to true growth. Solomon understood this when he said, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." And Paul in his letter to the Romans warns them not to be wise in their own conceits.

Humility and reverence are the conditions of acquiring knowledge. Professor Tyndall tells us that when he ascended the White Alp—he was the first to ascend it—he got to the top in the evening, and he went by himself to a spur of the mountain, taking his note-book with him to jot down some scientific observations. But from where he stood he beheld the glory of the Alps, white peaks smitten by the sword beams of the setting sun, until they flamed all around him in a sea of glory mingled with fire. It was so magnificent, so divine, that, he says, "I put my note-book into my pocket. I returned my pencil to its sheath. I felt it was not the time to jot down scientific notes. I felt the hour of worship had struck."

It is that worshipful spirit which is the truest interpretation of what our text means by the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of knowledge.

To fill our true place in the world and make

the most of our lives, this reverence toward God must be at the beginning and stand god-father, as it were, to whatever we do. The humblest life becomes dignified and splendid when this spirit of reverence pervades its atmosphere. A sturdy old man of the past century used to describe himself as "John Knott, blacksmith, by the grace of God." And why shall not a blacksmith be one by the grace of God as well as a king, or a priest, or a prophet be what he is by the grace of God? The man who enters upon his life in that spirit can go steadily forward, fronting any storm, having the assurance longed for in the lines of the poet:

"Only to know that the path I tread
Is the path marked out for me."

This true reverence toward God quickens the intellect and sustains its powers in the acquiring of knowledge and in the exercise of intelligence. The history of mankind is full of remarkable illustrations of the wonderfully quickening power of true religion in awakening a dormant mind. See John Bunyan, a poor, wretched, drunken tinker in the little town of Bedford in England.

He was the town sot, unknown, uncared for. Bunyan did not dream, and surely no one who knew him imagined, that he had a brain worth cultivating. But suddenly the man was brought under sharp conviction of sin against God. He felt, as he had never felt before, his accountability to God, and under the stress of that new feeling of reverence he turned to Jesus Christ for forgiveness, and was happily converted from his sins to this new life of striving to be like Christ.

What was the effect? It was like taking the bulb of a beautiful flower that has been held shut close for months in the grip of winter, and thrusting it into a warm, congenial soil with the sun ever more wooing it from the sky, until it bursts its wrappings and springs forth into vigorous, beautiful, fragrant life. So the dormant intellect in Bunyan was awakened. His new religious life, this new "fear of the Lord," was the beginning of such a knowledge as neither he nor his neighbor imagined was possible for him. He dreamed dreams. He saw visions. He translated them into simple and beautiful language that men study for literary style unto this day, and the key to it all was

réverence, this new worshipful spirit toward God.

Human life to-day is full of illustrations of this same truth. One of the greatest thinkers now living in the world, one of the authors who is regarded by those of high authority as being the peer of any intellect in the land, says that after he was a young man, physically full grown, he was driving a hack for a living in one of our cities, never dreaming that he had any more brains than were necessary to handle a pair of horses and take care of express packages. "I never imagined," said he, "that I had a head worth developing." But incidentally he came under the influence of a deep religious conviction, his heart was awakened to the terrible fact that he was a sinner against God and in need of forgiveness. He was led to look upon the Christ who died upon the cross for him, and, like Bunyan's pilgrim, he lost his burden of sin at the foot of the cross. In the new gladness which came to his soul his mind was awakened. A hungering after knowledge possest him, and in this new Christian spirit he knocked at every door of knowledge within his reach, and they opened

to him until he became a great Christian scholar and teacher.

I doubt not that there will be some who read these words who do not dream of possessing more than the average ability with which to serve humanity, who would be astonished, if they were to turn to God with reverent repentance for sin, and seek in loving devotion to lead the Christ life, to find how much intellectual power is lying dormant in them and what splendid qualities they have inherited which have never come to the light, but which would in that new heavenly warmth burst their wrappings and blossom into virtuous and helpful life. They will never know how great and glorious God made them to be until they give themselves completely to do His will in reverent love.

This reverence for God is necessary to the development of a full, rounded, manhood and womanhood. Dr. Watkinson recalls to our attention that it was an artistic law in Greece that no victor in the games could have a portrait statue of himself set up unless he had been successful in all five forms of contest, since anything short of success in all the five would leave open the possibil-

ity of certain parts of his body having been developed at the expense of other parts, so that the portrait statue would lack that complete and symmetrical perfection which a perfect figure ought to present.

As the Greek was thus anxious to secure the full, harmonious, balanced development of the body, the religion of Christ is set upon the realization of the life of humanity in all the fulness of its parts and the perfection of its parts. Christianity does no injustice to any single power of our complex nature and life: neither does it develop any one power at the expense of the rest.

The Indians cramp the head, the Chinese the feet, while the Europeans and the Americans often, endeavoring to follow fashion, cramp the body; but the Christian faith mutilates none of our faculties or functions. It is possible to sacrifice the body to the intellect, the intellect to the body, or the conscience to both; but the man who intelligently follows Jesus Christ does none of these things, but with healthy body, mind, and heart develops into a full-grown man.

I wish to lay emphasis on this point, that no young man or young woman can come

into a well-rounded character if the religious side of his or her nature is not developed. You can only be a dwarfed and crippled sample of humanity unless your nature grows on the Godward side. In this driving business age, most of us live in constant danger of having our lives dwarfed on every side except that of striving for business success and the gathering of material things. In such an age men and women who are in business have to keep the windows open toward God, or the higher nature will be smothered to death. Some one well says that to-day the business man, the poet, the artist, and the musician have to fight hard for existence and more often than not they fight in vain.

I have read the story of a prosperous grocer who died, and upon his tombstone was placed the epitaph: "He was born a man. He died a grocer." Possibly it was the same man's widow who hit on the happy idea of adding to the inscription: "His wife keeps on the business still." Whether we are grocer or baker, tailor or blacksmith, doctor, preacher, or lawyer, we must keep the whole man alive in us and keep the man uppermost, and we shall only

do this when we realize that the one priceless part of us is the soul. We must all fight for our souls. Our soul is our God-given and most precious possession. The most dreadful tragedies are not those that appear with great headlines in the newspapers. The most dreadful tragedies are those in which the blood shed is the invisible blood of the soul. And it is true religion, it is the awakening of this reverence for God that kindles our imagination, that makes the soul sensitive to everything that is beautiful, that thaws out the heart and causes its streams of affection to flow forth and make us worthy of our divine inheritance. It is this beautiful, romantic, glorious life, full of imagination and sympathy and glowing enthusiasm, to which I call you when I ask you to be a Christian.

This reverence for God will enable us to bear the trials and disappointments of life. To the soul without God life is a lonely and homesick experience. Maclean Watt says that half our sorrow and most of our solitariness arise from ourselves. A little more love of man and of God within us would bring many to our side and open doors

and windows for the song of comradeship to enter in. And then, instead of sighing, there would be something done, and the throb of true love would thrill the line of our duty. Sometimes men and women have risen out of absolute sorrow and given a stronger pull at the rope, spoken a quicker word, taken a braver step forward, and achieved things in the battle of life; just as the wind and rain faced quicken a healthy soul, set the blood boldly tingling; and those who dare them, find often in the wilderness and the solitary place hearts that were awaiting them, needing them, and made glad forever by their passing by.

God is everywhere; but He is most of all where the human outlook is darkest and human hope most feeble. He is in all joy and grief, but most of all where the heart at first fears to seek Him. Where the fallen, the buffeted, and the beaten struggle and stumble, He is to be found for certain. Where the dying hopes of the world are lying, where faith is feeble and hearts are growing cold, there, most of all, is God found walking in the wind and rain; and there most surely is He met by the brave and the bountiful.

If any are in sorrow and grief until your tears blind you and the breath of your longing dims your vision, let me assure you that your refuge is in God. Turn reverently to Him and you will find awakened in your soul such fountains of sympathy and love and confidence as will change all your attitude toward both this human life and the immortal life.

A reverent, worshipful spirit toward God will bring us into the consciousness of the fatherhood of God and of our sonship to Him, and in that consciousness alone can we know perfect peace. Dr. Gunsaulus, preaching in City Temple, London, once told his English audience that in the dark days of civil war, when the soul of Abraham Lincoln was weary, a little boy playing outside the White House became involved with another little boy, and they fought madly. He came in with his face bleeding and his body aching and walked straight into the Cabinet chamber and he looked about him and said, in the midst of all his trouble, with an absolute truth that lay deep in his soul, "I want my father." Secretary Chase was there. Suppose he had said, "I know where

the greatest master of finance this age has produced is." "But I want my father," the boy would have repeated. And another in that Cabinet might have said: "Boy, I can get for you the commander-in-chief of the armies and navies of the United States." "Oh, but I want my father," would still have been the cry of the boy in trouble. And another might have said, "I will bring you the greatest lawyer in America." "But I want my father," would have been the boy's agonizing cry.

My dear friends, because deep down in our breasts there beats a human heart; because we are God's children; because without Him we are forever orphaned; there will always in our greatest moments be something within us which says, "I want my father."

In the great crises of life the consciousness that you are the beloved child of your Heavenly Father is the only consideration that will give you peace. A little while ago the Bishop of London was preaching at noon to a company of business men. He said he had just come from the home of one of the richest women in England, who on the morrow was to undergo an operation for her life.

He could not help feeling what a slight difference her two millions of pounds made to her that day. "But," said the Bishop, "when I quoted to her: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,' those words were worth more to her than all her millions." It matters nothing to us, when death comes, what we leave behind. The question is: "Is my individual soul right with God? Am I safe in my Father's love?"

A YOUTH RUNNING THE GANTLET OF HIS FOES

“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”—
Prov. 1 : 10.

IN the old pioneer days, when America was new, and the settlers on the frontier were surrounded on every side by tribes of savage Indians, “running the gantlet” was by no means an unknown phrase and the mention of it was enough to make a brave man whiten at the lips and shudder at the heart. Sometimes, when a captive had been taken and the Indian braves were in a mood to play with their victim as a cat plays with a mouse, the captive would be given a chance for his life by being permitted to run the gantlet. True, he usually was killed on the route, but sometimes, wounded and suffering, tho still alive, he made his escape.

Two long lines of warriors stretched out before him. They were armed with clubs and tomahawks and knives, and down this nar-

row lane, hedged in on either side with these painted savages flourishing their weapons, lay the captive's only hope of liberty and life. And yet, terrible as it was, many a brave soldier or trapper, or frontier settler, welcomed the chance, and in spite of these terrible odds, by his ability, his strength, and his courage, ran that fearful gantlet to freedom.

A youth standing at the doorway of life in these cities faces a gantlet sometimes more terrible than that I have described. I do not now mean those temptations which come from ungoverned passions and appetites in his own nature, but temptations from organized evil on every side which threaten his destruction. It is impossible that any one should run the course of life without temptation. It is impossible to so hedge life about that temptation to evil will not have to be met. Adam, created in absolute purity by the hand of God, was not only tempted, but fell into sin. Moses and David and Solomon and Elijah, great men of mighty gifts and mighty determination for righteousness, all knew the terrible stress and enticement of temptation. Christ Him-

self was tempted of the devil. He did not yield, but He knew the power of temptation. It is the hope of our humanity that in the strength of God He overcame temptation, and in that power alone may we have victory.

The power of temptation to evil is illustrated in that word "entice!" Eve was enticed by the apple on the tree of good and evil. Every tree in the garden was open to her and to her husband, but Satan made her believe that none of them was so beautiful or so desirable as the only tree that God in His wisdom had withheld. I suppose that when first she looked she had no intention of taking the fruit, but little by little, as she gazed, she was hypnotized, as it were, by the play of her own imagination, and yielded to her desires.

In South Africa there is a phosphorescent spider that attracts and dupes its prey by successive flashes of light; the moth is apparently dazed, and with the emission of each gleam creeps closer to the transfigured assassin. This is an illustration of the process of temptation which entices us to sin. We draw nearer and nearer to the forbidden sin which entices, until we are overwhelmed

with disaster. If you do not wish to yield to sin, keep away from its enticement.

Many are overwhelmed because they allow the evil which at first shocked them to become so familiar in its appearance that they no longer shrink from it. The young man or the young woman who has allowed some fascinating sin to become of familiar mien in the thoughts is on the verge of ruin. It only needs the popular opportunity to overwhelm and destroy.

It is said that when the Chinese fowler sees a number of ducks settled on a pool and wants to catch them, he lets float out from him two or three large hollow gourds. These gourds float among the ducks. At first the birds are shy of them, but finding that no harm comes to them from the gourds, they soon swim about without fear. When the fowler sees this familiarity, he places over his head a similar gourd shell, with holes to see and breathe through, and wades slowly into the water up to his shoulders. By stealthy steps he gets in among the ducks. As soon as he is near enough he seizes a fowl by the legs, draws it under the water, fastens it to his girdle, and then proceeds to grasp another,

until his girdle is full; when he wades slowly out of the water, chuckling at his skill in deceiving the silly ducks with his gourd shells.

How many young men and young women are thus overcome and destroyed to-day! They are being enticed by outward experiences which seem perfectly harmless, but which will finally lead them to destruction.

The young man drinks his glass of beer or glass of wine, thinking it adds something to his appearance of worldly-wise manners, or because he does not like to appear odd in the circle where he finds himself placed, or because it is pleasant to feel the slight stimulant that quickens his tongue and adds to his gayety of mood. Thus he familiarizes himself with the idea of strong drink. It seems harmless. It looks like a far cry from the beer glass or the social wine glass among self-respecting friends to the drunkard and his beastly intoxication, but tens of thousands of young men, and young women, too, are being deceived in just that way.

The group of young people sitting at a card game in a fashionable parlor, playing for small wagers, which they say only add a little zest to the evening's entertainment,

grow to feel that playing cards for money is a harmless thing. It seems like a long leap from a respectable, honorable drawing-room, surrounded by neighbors and friends, playing bridge whist for small amounts, to the gambling-hell, hidden away in some saloon attic or cellar, where, with haggard eyes and desperate spirit, men squander not only money but life itself. But far as it seems, the journey is often accomplished in a very short time. I never shall forget a broken-hearted young woman who came to me only a few months ago, and told me that her husband, a young man of great promise, had become fascinated with the spirit of gambling in respectable homes in this city, and within two years had squandered twenty-five thousand dollars in the gambling-hells of Denver, and in doing so had broken down utterly in character and in health, and their home was desolate.

Mark Guy Pearse tells a story of the Scotch Highlands, where a company of sportsmen sat at lunch, when one of them spied, on the face of a great precipice opposite, a drove of sheep on a narrow ledge of rocks. He pointed it out to the others, and

one of the attendants explained that the sheep had been tempted by some show of green grass to jump down to some ledge a foot or so below them. Having eaten all the grass there, and being unable to get back easily, there seemed nothing to do but to scramble down to some lower ledge. There, in turn, they would finish what grass they could find, and jump to some ledge still lower. "Now they have got to the last," said he, looking through the field-glass and seeing that below them went a steep cliff without a break for two or three hundred feet. "What will happen now?" asked the others, eagerly. "Oh, now they will be lost. The eagles will see them, and will swoop down on them, and maddened with hunger and fright, they will leap over the cliff and be dashed to pieces on the rocks below."

It is just like that that a soul goes astray. There is a temptation to partake of the pleasures that are on the ledge just a little lower than the high tableland of that clean, wholesome family life where you have lived. It is only a little way, you think, and so you step down and have your good time. You expect to go right back, but it is much easier to go

on down to the next ledge than it is to get back, and so down you go, and so on, step by step, from ledge to ledge.

A year, five years, pass, perhaps, and your heart is harder, and your soul more indifferent than you ever dreamed could be possible for you. It may be that some of you have reached the last ledge, and are peering over into the darkness of the gulf beneath. It may be that the cruel screams of the human birds of prey, or the unseen but none the less real spirits of evil, are sounding in your ears, causing you to shrink and shiver with the horror of threatened ruin. But, oh, I thank God that even to you, tho you be on the last ledge above the precipice, I bring a message of hope, for the Good Shepherd, leaving the ninety and nine safe in the fold, has come out over the bleak mountains, seeking after you. Down over the ledges, where you have torn and mangled your feet, the Shepherd comes; even now He is calling to you, softly and tenderly, and if you will but yield to Him, He will take you up in His arms and put you on His shoulder and carry you home rejoicing.

The way of escape is in resistance to

temptation. Our text says, "Consent thou not." It is not a sin to be tempted. Even Christ was tempted. The sin lies in consenting to the tempter. The Scripture says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Resistance not only saves a man's self, but often saves others from yielding to temptation. Dr. Len Broughton tells the story of Tom Brumby, who was with Dewey in Manila. He came back to Atlanta to take part in the Peace Jubilee. The leading social club in the city gave a great banquet in honor of the hero of Manila.

When it came to the drinking of champagne, Tom Brumby hesitated a moment, then he arose and said, quietly but firmly, "My friends and fellow countrymen, I can't drink this wine. I trust you will not consider it a breach of etiquette, but I would simply ask the privilege of drinking water." He sat down. There was not a glass of champagne touched at that table that night. And everybody said it was the most tremendous sermon for temperance ever delivered in Atlanta. Of course, it took a lot of pluck to do it. In that one moment the man burned up, as he afterward said, more nervous

energy than during all the firing of the fleet in the battle of Manila. But he maintained his integrity and made it safer for other young men beside himself.

Sometimes our temptations to evil come in very perplexing ways, and it becomes necessary to give up some things that are very delightful to us in order that we may save our souls alive and maintain our integrity before God. But in such a case we must not hesitate. No sacrifice is too great if it is necessary to maintain our peace with God.

I want to give you two stories which Dr. F. B. Meyer tells out of his own pastoral experience.

A young woman came to him in his study one day and said, "You know I have been physically suffering for some time, and we have tried all the medical men in our neighborhood, but they have failed to help me; and my greatest girl friend is a Christian Scientist, and she has prevailed on me to undertake their treatment. But," she said, "they have taken away my Lord." Dr. Meyer said to her, "Christian Science gives the assertion of the will; it ignores the presence of suffering and disease; whereas, in

Christianity, the will yields to suffering, and having learned the lesson with the pain, it then seeks from God relief and strength. Christianity is a submission. If you will come with me in prayer, we will ask for the discipline." After they had arisen from their knees he could see that she was still troubled. "What troubles you now?" he asked her. "I feel," she replied, "that Christ has brought me back to Himself; but what shall I do about my friend—what can I do?"

"There is but one thing to do," he said. "Give her a fair chance—try to win her back to Jesus; but if she still clings to it, there is nothing but to cut off the friendship. 'If thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off.' "

As this young woman went away from Dr. Meyer's study, a young man, evidently an artist, came to the door. This was his story:

"You know I am very fond of my profession, which is art, but I have the most awful fight a man ever had. I have to study anatomy, and it seems impossible for me to preserve my purity."

"But," Dr. Meyer said, "medical men and

others have to study anatomy and physiology and yet maintain purity.”

“Ah, but it is not so with me,” he replied.

“My dear young friend,” said Dr. Meyer, “after all, to have a pure heart is greater than art. If things are so with you, there is nothing for it but to put art away.”

And these principles you may apply in your own lives. The great thing you are in the world for is to build up a good manhood, a pure womanhood, and to so use your manhood and your womanhood that your influence shall be helpful and blest on those who walk the way of life with you. No sacrifice is too great for us to make, if it be necessary, for the accomplishment of the great end of our lives.

I do not know where it is that you must meet the great fight of your life; but you know, and God knows, and if you will resist evil with an honest heart, if you will turn to Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, you will find the strength and the fellowship which are necessary to give you victory. Some of you are far away from home. Your Christian father, or your praying mother, or the strong, true

friends that once were your shelter and protection are far away. In the new city, among strangers, with temptations to evil on every hand, the fight for righteousness seems like a lonely struggle; but, thank God, there is One—He who loves you best, and can help you most—who is always near at hand. Christ your Savior is saying to you, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” If in your lonely struggle you will turn to Him, you will not only find forgiveness for the past, but you will find a tender and loving comradeship which will make you strong for the future.

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE STRANGE WOMAN

“The Lord giveth wisdom . . . to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God: for her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.”—Prov. 2 : 6, 16-18.

IT is my purpose to treat our theme in the positive rather than in the negative manner. I believe that personal purity is to be maintained by positive earnest devotion to right living rather than by standing on guard in a negative way against temptations to uncleanness. If a young man's attitude toward all women is high and noble, it is his greatest safeguard against bad women.

It is well to call attention in the beginning of our study to the fact that there can be no more important theme for any young man to consider than his relation to women. As mother, sister, friend, wife, daughter, a man's pleasure as well as his duty brings him

in contact with womanhood from the cradle to the grave. That he may be born into the world at all, a woman goes down into the shadow of death to meet his childish, groping fingers. Womanhood watches over him in his weakness, when he is a little helpless bundle of suction, giving back nothing, requiting nothing, not knowing enough to feel either love or thanks. When he is old enough to prattle and play in childhood's hour, bewitching girlhood is his sweetest and most fascinating playmate; while the background of all that young life continues to be womanhood's sympathetic face and kindly bosom. As manhood begins to dawn, he finds interwoven in all the lore of the books, and wealth of poetry and pictures, as well as all that is beautiful and idealistic in society, the ever-changing form of woman. His highest hope, his noblest struggle, his most heroic achievements, lose the finest element of joy and the keenest zest of realization unless they are shared by some congenial womanly soul.

When old age comes, and the weakness of a second childhood gathers about him, it is to woman that he must turn for sympathy and compassion. Woman gives man life; that

life is lonely and dwarfed and helpless without her brooding tenderness in youth, her chaste fellowship in middle life, and her compassionate sympathy in old age. He pillows his head upon her bosom in babyhood; and her hand is the last that soothes his fevered brow as he is about to die. Surely the question of man's relation to woman is second only to his relation to God.

I have thus seriously introduced our theme because I wish to put emphasis on the statement that a man's relation to woman is of first importance. At every step of a young man's career some woman will be coming into the arena of his life, and his attitude toward her will be an index finger to point out his destiny for good or for ill.

I think many men do not properly appreciate that an insult to one woman is an insult to womanhood. A noble young woman was once conversing with her younger brother, who was speaking lightly of a girl friend. She exclaimed, "Oh, Benjie, you hurt me!" "You, Sis! Why, what have you to do with it? You're all right!" "But you, Benjie? You, my knight, without fear, and without reproach, I can not bear to think that a

thoughtless girl's unhappy blunders make mirth for you. When you are not true and knightly to all women, you are not true to mother and me. Every time you help a sister woman to be truer and better, you are paying tribute to mother and me. Every time you fail in this, you cast reproach on us whose part it has been to teach you how to regard women and how to treat them. Every wayward girl is a wound to womanhood; and every man who helps a girl to be wayward wounds his sister and his mother."

There is another thing which I believe needs to be said with great emphasis to men as well as to women, and that is that a sin on the part of a man toward a woman is just as dark and loathsome as it is on the part of a guilty woman. A man has no right to ask that the woman he loves, and is willing to marry, shall be more careful of her person or her chastity than he is himself. The false standards of society that have forgiven or shut the eyes on a man's immorality, while they punish the woman for like guilt, do not by any means thwart or do away with the laws of God. With sympathetic interest I urge upon you, my brothers, that there is no

sin that will more surely eat into the very citadel of happiness, and follow the sinner with relentless persistency, than a sin against womanhood. Woman's honor is the altar of home and humanity and civilization itself, and no man can lay profane hands on that altar and not grievously suffer for it. God does not always pay at sunset, nor at the end of the week; but at last he pays.

There is another delicate but needed word which I wish to say that is closely akin to the last. The power to love a pure good woman with a love that is quenchless and abiding is one of the greatest powers that God has given to any man. And yet many a young man unfits himself to be a noble and sincere lover by immoral and wicked associations with women. It is impossible that a man shall regard one woman as his plaything, a soiled and impure toy, which he may take up and thrust aside at his pleasure, for his own selfish gratification, and have the perfectly pure and loving thought that the true lover ought to have about any other woman. Many a man soils his mind by an evil life, and so fills his memory and the chambers of his imagination with lustful images and im-

pure pictures that if the good woman to whom he afterward pays court but knew his thoughts she would turn from him with loathing and disgust.

A traveler, having occasion to journey along the Rhode Island State line some years since, was shown a large clump of forest trees, just within the border of that little commonwealth, which was literally blackened with fishhawks' nests. The farmer who was with him told him that the reason lay in the fact that Rhode Island alone, of all the New England States, protected the lives of these hawks. The hawks had found this out, and all up and down the line between Connecticut and Rhode Island were to be seen the results of this protection by one State and war on the part of the other. On the Connecticut side of the fence for miles and miles scarcely a nest of this great bird was ever found, while in Rhode Island the nests were everywhere, even in the tops of the chimneys of abandoned houses. So far as was known there was only one pair of fishhawks which nested in southeastern Connecticut, and they had taken possession of an inaccessible pine-tree in a great swamp; but on the Rhode Island

side of the line the birds were as tame as are the storks in Holland.

Now the difference in men's hearts and lives is like that. If you give nesting room to evil thoughts and impure and wicked desires in your imagination, you may depend upon it that these filthy birds of unholy purpose will come to abound in your life.

There is another side of this question which needs to be emphasized in a study of this sort, and that is that the "strange woman" herself, who is so dangerous a companion for any man, is in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred herself the victim of some man's injustice and sin. But while that is true, and is never to be forgotten, the warning of the Scripture, nevertheless, holds good. While there is no companion so valuable to a young man as a good woman, there is no one so dangerous as a bad woman. Herod and Samson and Solomon all found that to be true, and it is illustrated every day of the world. I am sure that nothing is so despoiling the manhood of our cities in our own times as the leprous and blighting hand of lust. Nothing makes the inner soul so unclean; nothing so hardens the heart against God; nothing

so deadens the ear to the voice that would teach it spiritual things; nothing so saturates the imagination with poisonous impulse as unmanly and unholy dealings with women. The burned and despoiled wreckage of lust is upon every land.

Some years ago an English traveler had one of the most thrilling experiences that ever befell a mountain climber. He ascended the Mauna Loa volcano in the Hawaiian Islands, while it was in a state of furious eruption. Mr. Watson, for that was the name of the traveler, became separated from his companions and guides in making some explorations on his own account. He came around the side of the mountain to where a great river of lava was bounding in a straight line down the mountain side, while about eight hundred feet above, on the slope of the hill, the crater, like the mouth of some infernal monster, was pouring forth melted stone. He sat for some considerable time, probably for a couple of hours, gazing upon that strange river of rolling, flowing, bursting fire rushing down the side of the mountain. Some thousand or more feet below, this stream entered a thicket of trees which, Mr. Watson observed

through his glass, seemed to have wonderful powers of resisting the attack of the flames. Toward night he arose from his seat below the rocks, intending to go over the summit, down the hill, and walk out between the lava on the side which he was to cross. But he suddenly noticed that whichever way he looked he could see a stream of lava. He thought his eyes had been resting too long on running lava and that it was only an illusion, and so went forward. But he had not been mistaken. While he had been sitting with his back to the direction from which he had come, and in which he must go, with his eyes on the flowing stream, enchanted with its marvels, there had broken from the lower edge of the crater a second flow. He started on down and had proceeded several hundred feet when, to his horror and amazement, he discovered that the new stream of lava ran directly into the earlier stream. The streams joined and his retreat had been cut off. He was hemmed in by running rivers of fire. As he meditated on the best means of escape, his eye fell on the singular forest at the bottom of the incline and he thought of the heat-defying properties of that wood. If he could

only turn the bunch which grew above him into service. Ah, he had it—stilts. He had been an expert on stilts when a boy, and he felt certain his skill had not forsaken him. Drawing a stout-bladed knife from his pocket, he began hewing at the base of one of the smallest trees. The wood was of the species known as ironwood. When the blade grew dull he whetted it on the rocks. All through that long night he worked, while the terrible furnace belched above him, and the rivers of liquid desolating fire ran on either side. By daylight he had the stilts made, and, mounting them, started off to the edge of the flow. The wood smoldered but did not blaze as he waded through the lava. The heat was frightful, blistering his face and hands. As he arrived at the opposite edge of the river of fire one charred stilt broke off, but eager hands grasped him and he swooned in the arms of his friends. He was saved!

I doubt not I speak to some who are in a peril more terrible than that. You are hemmed in by streams of influence that are evil and devilish in their fascination for your soul. You are surrounded by flowing streams of fiery lusts that threaten to burn to the

very center all that is pure and holy in your nature. If you yield, if you give up, it were better for you that you had never been born.

Do you think I exaggerate? Do you imagine that my illustration is too strong for the facts? Do you doubt that a young man tempted to soil the purity of his manhood by lust is in any such terrible danger as I have set forth? Then listen not to my word, but to the word of the wisest man that ever lived; a word set down as a lighthouse on a dangerous coast, forever sending out its warning light from God's Book. Listen while I recall it to you:

Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister;
And call understanding thy kinswoman:
That they may keep thee from the strange woman,
From the stranger which flattereth with her words,
For at the window of my house
I looked through my casement,
And beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among the youths,
A young man void of understanding,
Passing through the street near her corner,
And he went the way to her house,
In the twilight, in the evening,
In the black and dark night:

And, behold, there met him a woman
 With the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

* * * * *

And with an impudent face said unto him,

* * * * *

Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
 Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry,
 With carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.
 I have perfumed my bed
 With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning:
 Let us solace ourselves with loves.

* * * * *

With her much fair speech she caused him to yield,
 With the flattering of her lips she forced.
 He goeth after her straightway,
 As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
 Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;
 Till a dart strike through his liver;
 As a bird hasteth to the snare,
 And knoweth not that it is for his life.
 Hearken unto me now, therefore, O ye children,
 And attend to the words of my mouth.
 Let not thine heart decline to her ways,
 Go not astray in her paths.
 For she hath east down many wounded:
 Yea, many strong men have been slain by her.
 Her house is the way to hell,
 Going down to the chambers of death.

A CERTAIN PRESCRIPTION FOR A HAPPY AND HONORABLE OLD AGE

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.”—Prov. 3: 13-16.

THE key to this text, and indeed the key to this whole Book of Proverbs, is in this word “wisdom.” We must not for a moment suppose that Solomon uses the word in the narrow meaning which often attaches to it to-day. He does not mean a mere play of the intelligence, or a certain fund of acquired knowledge. As he uses it, it is a religious word and is spoken of as a virtue. The Lord alone can give wisdom. He is the one fountain of wisdom. Elsewhere are partial revelations, broken experiences, hints of meaning, temporary satisfactions; but until we have discovered the Lord, and set Him always before us, we shall be working without a

center. Dr. Joseph Parker truly says that true religion comes before true philosophy. Righteousness of character is necessary to the enjoyment of the pleasures of sound wisdom. God is evermore on the side of those who are righteous. Wisdom enters into the heart, and thus keeps the whole life pure. Discretion and understanding are represented as the keepers of the soul—its protectors and guides—saving the soul from evil. We shall find true wisdom, the wisdom that strengthens and beautifies and glorifies life, only when we find God, and are guided of Him. It is only the man who knows God who knows what life is.

Charles Sheldon has written a little book, entitled "Robert Hardy's Seven Days." In that story Mr. Sheldon tells of a certain great employer of labor, Robert Hardy, who was a man of cold, hard spirit, who, however, thought he did his duty by paying his pew rent and giving something extra for the church. He was a man who never talked about religion to his children, because it was not considered proper. But gradually his business began to return upon himself, because he had not treated his employees prop-

erly; and in his home circle he found that his children were going into evil ways. One night he falls asleep and dreams. And in his dream he looks into the face of God, and God tells him that he has only seven days to live — seven days in which to undo the past, and in which to do the work of a whole lifetime; seven days in which, if possible, to rescue his own children; seven days in which to regulate all his business affairs and establish righteous relations with his employees. Suddenly life opens out to him and he sees the folly of the life he has been living. When at last his soul has seen God, he hates and loathes the selfishness and greed that has possessed him. He did not know life until he met God.

There is another book, written by Mr. H. G. Wells, called "The Wonderful Visit." The core of this book is that an angel materialized himself and came down into this world, and a clergyman who was out shooting shot the angel, thinking it was a new kind of bird, the consequence being that the angel could not soar back into the sky and so became a pilgrim in our human life. Now, this angel had no knowledge or interest in any of our prejudices, or feeling about caste or class. He

was interested in people just because they were interesting people, and not because of their birth, or their money, or anything of the kind. You can imagine what trouble this made for the people who wanted to take him into society. He found, for instance, a servant-girl who knew more about God and things that are eternal than anybody else he met, and, to the horror of the society people who wanted to patronize him and make a lion of him, he preferred to talk with the servant-girl. Of course, the society people said he was no gentleman. He could not be a gentleman and think of doing that. They tried to explain to him our miserable social distinctions, our ideas of caste; tried to get him to understand that what we call civilization does not really recognize brotherhood of spirit at all, but silly, shoddy distinctions which divide man from man. But they could not get the angel to understand any of these things. And yet I suppose that these people were no more astonished than we would be now if Christ came and lived His beautiful glorious life in our midst. To know what life really is, and to rise above the wretched sophistries which make life selfish and ugly, we must come

face to face with God and see life from the high standpoint of things which are eternal.

One of the strongest of all of Robert Browning's poems is the one in which he tells the story of an Arab physician, who was wandering in the East, immediately after the time of the death of Christ, and came upon Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, still living. The Arab physician was very much interested in Lazarus, and gave himself to investigate the matter as an interesting biological study. He would have dismissed it as a delusion but for one thing. There was one thing about this man Lazarus that could not be lightly put aside. He was living his life as a man who had passed through some extraordinary transition. The strange thing about him was the things that affected him and the things that did not. Many things that his neighbors considered great things were to him nothing, and things which they considered insignificant were to him matters of sublime importance. The physician notices him watching the little children at their games, and suddenly one of these little children loses his temper, and this man's eyes begin to open and a sort of horror lurks in

them. He has seen sin. Yet a little child might die, and pass into the presence of God, and his eyes would light with joy and love and satisfaction for him; but sin—that was an awful thing in his eyes. They told him that Rome was on the march, to blot out his town and his tribe and himself, but it produced no impression on him at all. Nothing seemed great or real to him except faith in God and devotion to truth and righteousness. “His heart and brain moved there, his feet stood here,” said the physician. He was a man who had seen God, and had come back into this life with new ideas of the presence of God. He held communion with the source of wisdom and knew what life really is.

Our text declares that there are three things which this true wisdom can bestow upon us, and the first is *length of days*. In another place the Scripture says that the wicked man shall not live out half his days. We sometimes see what seem to be exceptions to this rule. But before we speak of them let us emphasize the fact of the great truth of the statement in a general way. We all know by our own observation that a truly wise life, which is reverent toward God and

kind and gentle in its good will toward our fellow men, tends to long life. There are many reasons for this. In the first place, a sober life, clean and wholesome in its eating and drinking, has so marked a tendency toward length of days that the life insurance companies can give you remarkable statistics on the subject. Not only so, but the life that is self-controlled, that is kindly in its spirit, that is patient under sorrow, that is void of offense toward God and man, is the greatest possible guaranty of a long and peaceful career. The old proverb, "The good die young," is only a humorous quip, an ironical comment on a certain sort of Sunday-school literature which used to be in vogue many years ago. The fact is, that the truly good man, whose faith in God and sincere devotion to righteousness leads him to live a sober and wholesome life physically, and a reverent and loving life mentally and morally, has the best chance for a long life of any man on earth. True, now and then a man or a woman seems to break many of the laws of God and man, sustained by inherited strength, and lives to be old, but this is the exception and gives point to another phase of the subject, that

length of days is no great blessing unless there be the truly wise mind and heart. A man who stupefies his physical nature by excesses, or who corrupts his mental and moral faculties by selfishness or sin of any kind, has destroyed the charm of the length of days. Here is a very simple illustration:

“A young man in good health, with an elastic step, a clear eye, a definite purpose in life, wakes from a sound sleep to look out on the dawn of a new spring morning, and rejoice in the exhilaration which breathes from the sun and the air, bird and blossom, hill-top and meadow land. There is a sound of music in aromatic pines and spruces; there is a fragrance of flowers just swept with translucent dew, filling all space; the resurrection of Nature’s forces impresses itself upon him, not like a stiff, hard fact so much as a truthful fancy; and he calls upon all that is within him to praise the Lord for making such a world and giving him such power to enjoy it. Nature, many-voiced and beautiful with a youth that is old, and old age that is still young, appeals to a healthy mind and body with a power as sweet as it is strong, and as full of meaning as it is empty of flattery.

“But let the same bright morning, with its gold and silver lining, gleam just as freshly upon a young life which has smirched its robe of purity by a night’s debauch, and how much meaning has all of Nature’s richness to such a soul? He is in no condition to respond to it. His head aches, his hand trembles, his tongue is dry, the brute part of him is paying him for abusing God-given powers, and Nature may play her sweetest tune for him in vain. By his own act, he has put himself outside of her majestic touch, and, turning his back upon the sunlight, which dazzles his eyes instead of awakening them, he drops into heavy slumber again, and so the glory of that morning passes from him forever.”

And in this we have an illustration of all life. Length of days, to be a true blessing, must be crowned with wisdom.

Another of these treasures which the truly wise life brings to us is *riches*. This is true in a double sense. First of all, in the most narrow and common acceptance of the term, it is truth. The wealth of the world lies in Christian nations and in Christian hands. And this is not at all wonderful. Christianity, true wisdom which recognizes God and wor-

ships Him, quickens the intellect, stimulates the inventive faculties of the mind, enlarges the capacity for enjoyment, and so tends to the production of wealth. Not only so, but true wisdom saves from extravagance and wastefulness. It teaches the value of the good gifts of God and shows how they may be preserved. A poor drunken debauchee, reckless and poverty-stricken, truly converted to God, becoming sincerely wise, becomes industrious, and saving, and ere long is not only self-supporting, but often surrounded by an abundance of this world's goods. So it becomes true that, as a general rule of existence, the wise and righteous man, as well as such a nation, rises out of poverty into wealth.

But there is another phase of riches which is still more hopeful and comforting. The truly wise and reverent man becomes rich in a nobler sense than in the possession of this world's goods. A good deal of attention has been attracted recently to the case of Mr. Henry Baxendale, an Englishman, who not long ago gave up an inheritance of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars rather than withdraw from the fellowship of a certain

church to which he belonged, which his father very much disliked. In doing it he says: "For myself, I would prefer to remain a poor disciple of the old Bible Brotherhood, and a member of that company of whom it was so significantly said by the Founder of Christianity, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.'" Who shall say that that man is not rich without a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The true riches are of the mind and soul. The artist Wilkie once went to see Titian's picture of the Last Supper. An old attendant stood by and said, "I have sat in sight of that picture nearly threescore years. The visitors have come and looked and wondered and gone their way. My companions have dropt off one by one; but these remain—these painted men. They are true realities; we are but shadows." Oh, young man, that is the truth. Not in outward wealth, but in inward wealth is true riches. No riches except the riches of the soul will really satisfy us. Jesus says: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up

into everlasting life." There is the satisfaction for all our nature, for all our instincts. Dr. Watkinson was once entertained in Manchester, England. Looking from the window of the house of his host, he saw a sea-gull on the ground trying to swim in a pie-dish. There was a little water in the pie-dish, and the bird of the ocean was doing its best to make the most of its struggling instinct. He said it was a pitiable sight to see that bird, with its instinct for the unmeasured ocean, trying to satisfy itself with a pie-dish. But, my dear young friends, is not that a picture of human nature trying to satisfy itself with gold and silver, with flocks and herds, with houses and lands? You smile at the bird of the sea in that miserable limitation, but it is infinitely more pathetic to see a man or a woman trying to find real happiness in anything short of the unmeasured wealth of the mind and the heart.

We have only space for a word concerning another treasure which wisdom holds in her left hand—the noble treasure of *honor*. It requires no argument to prove to you that no one is ever truly honored even in this world who lacks reverence toward God and

goodness, and love toward his fellow men. I saw a cartoon the other day which represented the richest man in the world shedding bitter tears of disappointment and stretching out his hands in piteous appeal toward a figure which the artist intended to stand for his fellow man. The rich man had everything else, but he could not command the love and good will of his fellows. He could bring luxuries from the ends of the earth without limit, but the plainest necessity, the honor of his fellows, his wealth could not buy. True wisdom is at the beginning of honor.

The late Sir George Williams, the founder of the Young Men's Christian Association, had an interesting story. He was the youngest of eight sons in a poor farmer's family. There were high traditions of farming in this family. Six of the brothers were farmers at the time George Williams left school at thirteen years of age. It was a matter of debate in the family counsel whether George was really equal to becoming a farmer. At last they were sure he was not, because one stormy day George was bringing home a load of hay along a ruddy lane, and through some mischance, all in a moment, hay, horse, boy,

all tumbled over into the ditch. Well, that, as far as the father, mother, and brothers were concerned, settled the future of George Williams. They sent him into Bridgewater to work in a draper's shop, and one Sunday night, after George Williams came home from church services, at the back of that draper's shop he knelt down and gave his heart to God, yielded himself entirely to Christ. God gave him the true wisdom. He became a great soul-winner. He founded the Young Men's Christian Association, which has girdled the globe. They made a knight of him, and when he was dead they buried him with great honor in St. Paul's cathedral in London.

THE PRIMROSE PATH THROUGH LIFE

“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”—Prov. 3: 17.

HENRY WARD BEECHER once said that when men set out to gain pleasures, they are like boys who run after butterflies. When you run after a butterfly, the wind that you make shoves him from you, and the faster you run the stronger is that wind; but, if you are going after something else, and a butterfly passes near you, with sudden turn and downstroke you can catch him. Now, if a man sets out to be happy, he may as well say, “Good-by, Satisfaction”; but if a man sets out to be a man, and to do the things that are noble and just and right and true, everywhere and under all circumstances, butterflies will follow him, and light on his head, and back, and all over him! He will be happy who does not care about being happy. It is the rebound of other people’s joy that makes your soul glad.

The high source of that true wisdom of which Solomon speaks insures the greatness of the pleasure and peace that will come from it. When we inquire into the water-supply of a city, as to its abundance and purity, we are comforted if we are taken back into the high mountains, far above all possibility of contamination, and find it in the abounding springs that burst forth at the foot of the snow-drifts or the glaciers on the lofty hills of God. So we may be sure that great pleasure and holy peace must come from a high source. Nothing that springs up out of the low marshes of self-indulgence will give us great or abiding peace. Wordsworth, the great Christian poet, says, "We live by admiration, hope, and love." And it is certain that our great joys come to us from these high sources. Paul says, "We are saved by hope." And Canon Farrar, commenting on Paul's declaration, says that without Hope no good or great deeds are possible, even in the earthly life. And this sublime hope, which has its foundation in our faith in God and our sincere reverence and worship of Him, is the source of all great pleasure and that undying joy that gives men nerve and

courage to do the great deeds. It was Hope which hung the lantern on the ship of Columbus. It was Hope that lighted the way of Dante's imagination. It was Hope that brought to Milton the Song of Paradise when he was imprisoned by blindness. It was Hope that led the steps of Newton amid dim unknown worlds. It was Hope that inspired the sweet self-denial of St. Francis, and the passionate courage of Martin Luther, the burning enthusiasm of John Wesley and George Whitefield, and the glorious philanthropy of Wilberforce. It was Hope that made these men the most joyous men of their day, men whose sweet humor and glad-heartedness are as famous as the great deeds they achieved. And I wish to urge upon you, young men and young women, that there will be no great streams of pleasure, and no abiding river of peace in your life unless they have their source in this supreme hope which can only come from the true wisdom, sincere reverence, and worship of God. "His voice abounds in precious and golden promises; they come to us like perfumes amid the sweetest mysteries of life; in the mirth of little

children, in the gladness of happy homes, in the dew of baptismal blessings, amid the sound of marriage-bells; yes, they even mingle in the light of tribulation, amid the sobs of the afflicted and the tears of the bereaved. The words of God are rich with eternal hope. We may be like a dove soiled when it settles on the dust-heaps of the cities, but when Hope enables us to rise again toward heaven we shall be 'covered with silver wings and our feathers like gold.' Life without Hope draws nectar in a sieve, and Hope without an object can not live; but life which is supported by the hope which God gives us is, indeed, a thing for which to bless Him, 'for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life.' "

There is great danger that we shall stop up the great sources of pleasure and peace in our lives by lack of use. I imagine that there is an undercurrent of thought and feeling in the minds and hearts of many young people, that however indifferent and careless they may be to religious things in early life, in middle life and old age they will surely draw their happiness from the highest and noblest sources. Here is often a fatal blun-

der. Men and women burn out the very possibility of happiness and peace through absorption in worldly things, so that in later life they have no power to feed their joy on nobler sources. As Doctor Hillis says: "One of the greatest preachers on this subject in modern times is the famous Charles Darwin, the scientist. He tells us that in his youth he had a passion for music and poetry. He could read Shakespeare all day and improvise at the piano all night. But after several years of the study of natural history, he became absorbed in the physical sciences. Every atom of blood and nerve went into the scientific study, while he systematically denied himself his old delights. Slowly his musical and artistic faculty decayed for want of nurture and food. Unfed, they died. Famished, they shriveled into nothing. Later, in old age, overtaken by ill health, Mr. Darwin sought recreation, and then the memory of the old love of poetry and music came back. How pathetic his reference to the dead past:

" 'If I had to live my life again I would make it a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for

perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.'

“The same thing was true of Darwin’s religious feeling. If he had gone to church or cultivated his religious faculties, he would never have become agnostic, and in his old age would have had the supreme peace that passeth all understanding. He writes of his earlier life:

“‘I was led to the firm conviction of the existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul. In my journal I wrote that “While standing in the midst of the grandeur of a Brazilian forest, it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, admiration, and devotion which fill and elevate the mind.” I well remember my conviction that there is more in man than the mere breath of the body. But now the grandest scenes would not cause any such convictions and feelings to rise in my mind. It may be truly said that I am like a man who has

become color-blind; and the universal belief by men of the existence of redness makes my present loss of perception of not the least value as evidence. Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress.' "

Was there ever anything more pathetic? I urge upon you to keep the streams of eternal pleasures and immortal peace always open and flowing in your heart through sincere reverence and loving devotion to God.

One of the important characteristics of the pleasures of true religion is that it is in the power of no one else. No one can take it away. Many of the joys of life are at the mercy of other people. Another man's greed, or avarice, or meanness of any sort, may destroy them, as a band of savages might in the old times leap suddenly out of the forest and burn down the houses in which the settlers found their joy and their comfort. But when our happiness comes from the highest sources, it is under control of no one but ourselves. It is a portable pleasure which we carry around in our own heart without alarming either the eye or the envy of the world. A man who makes this his supreme pleasure

is like the man in the parable of Christ who sold all his goods and bought the one great pearl. Dr. Robert South truly says that there is nothing that can raise a man to such a generous and noble condition as to have neither to cringe nor to fawn in order to receive his happiness. Great, indeed, is the man who has the happiness within, for which men depend upon others. For surely I need salute no man's threshold, sneak to none of his friends or servants to speak a good word for me in my conscience. If I can make my duty my delight; if I can feast, and caress my mind with the pleasure of beautiful thoughts or noble deeds, then my pleasures are as free as my will; no more to be controlled by other people than my choice or the unlimited range of my fancies or my desires.

Let us not forget, either, that the noblest pleasures do not depend upon what we have, but upon what we are. Christ said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." And some one else says it depends upon how many chords there are in a man's heart which vibrate with a touch of joy. A man's very fatness of physical and worldly success may be all the

time covering up the noblest chords from which the highest happiness resounds, while a man who lives a simple, faithful life, true to the noblest ends by noblest motives, and who keeps his conscience clear and clean, has touched in him by invisible hands chords that give forth music such as is never known to the lower nature. Some poet sings:

The bird sits singing on her nest,
And chants aloud
Her trust in God, and so is blest
'Neath darkest cloud.

The heart that trusts forever sings,
Christ's sunshine lights as on its wings,
A well of joy within it springs
Come good or ill;
Whate'er to-day or to-morrow brings,
It singeth still.

The pleasures of genuine religion never satiate or weary us. All our pleasures that depend upon the senses are very transitory. They perish even while we are enjoying them. Pleasure dwells no longer upon the appetite than the necessities of nature, and all that follows is a burden. Every morsel a man eats after his hunger is satisfied only adds

new labor to a tired digestion. After a man has quenched his thirst, every drop he drinks is a threat of disease and trouble. As one of the old writers quaintly says, "He that prolongs his meals, and sacrifices his time, as well as his other conveniences, to his luxury, how quickly does he out-set his pleasure!"

And the same thing is true of the man who thinks he will have continued pleasure by making all life a playtime. There are no people in the world to-day who are so bored, so blasé, so bankrupt of all true joy, as those who are trying to give up all their lives to sport and recreation. But if we give ourselves to true wisdom, so that our pleasure and our duty belong together, then we may have a peace that flows like a river, and it is a peace which comforts and blesses every one who comes within its influence. Henry Stanley, the great traveler and explorer, said that when he went to Africa in search of David Livingstone, he was the biggest atheist in London. He found Livingstone, and behind Livingstone he found Christ. For, as he walked with Livingstone, day by day, he saw to his amazement that this man had strange and wonderful joy and

happiness, a deep abiding peace connected with the humblest duties and to what Stanley thought to be the most repulsive service for ignorant and unlovable people. And the longer Stanley remained with Livingstone, the more he became convinced that the source of this wonderful pleasure and serene joy was in the fellowship which Livingstone had with Christ, and so it was that Christ came into the heart of Stanley, and he says: "Livingstone converted me, but he never meant to." And a little while ago, when Stanley, who described himself as "the biggest atheist in London," came to die, he joyfully said to his broken-hearted wife: "Do not weep; we shall meet again."

David Livingstone had such a fellowship with God that the music of the divine life was awakened at every touch of another soul, tho for many years he had been living among heathen companions. The abiding, never-ceasing, never-wearying fountain of peace was in his own soul. There are old violins that are worn and splintered and patched, that have been mended again and again until they are ugly to the common eye, which are worth a thousand dollars apiece, because of

the musical sounds which can be awakened from them. And there are other violins that might be inlaid with gold and sheathed in silver and adorned with diamonds until they were charming to the eye, yet they would be worthless to the musician. It is the quality of soul that counts in a violin or a man. If true wisdom abide in the heart, if there be genuine fellowship between the soul and God, then neither sickness nor poverty nor old age can stifle the joy which flows forth from the character of the soul itself. A good old man in Rhode Island, in his ninetieth year, looking forward to what he called his last voyage, wrote these lines:

My work on earth is well-nigh done,
I wait the setting of the sun;
I hear the surging of the sea
That beats upon eternity.

I see far off the shadowy realm
And thither turn the trembling helm;
The winds that blow so cold and drear
Grow softer as the end draws near.

The distant gleams of silver light
Relieve the darkness of the night:

There stand upon the mystic shore
Faint forms of loved ones gone before.

The voice that once said, "Peace, be still,"
Now whispers softly, "Fear no ill":
I sail alone, yet not alone,
The Savior takes me for His own.

I wait the greeting when I land,
I wait the grasp of His loved hand.

THE TENDER MEMORIES OF HOME

“For I was my father’s son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words.”—Prov. 4: 3, 4.

SOLOMON, the writer of this text, was a man of great wealth and power, as well as famous for his wisdom, and yet when we listen to words like these, the humblest man feels the throb of a brother’s heart.

President Roosevelt, during the General Conference of the Methodists in Baltimore, delivered an address to a large number of the delegates in Washington. On rising to speak, after an introduction by Bishop Cranston, which had been very kind and appreciative, expressing the generous sympathy of the Church with Mr. Roosevelt’s ideals of public life, the President responded with evident emotion, beginning his address with this impulsive sentence: “I feel mighty kin to you.” So, when we read Solomon’s words, recalling the tenderness of his mother and

the childhood teaching of his father, we know that he is not thinking of his palace, nor the great court that surrounds him, nor of his armies, nor of his wealth. He is just a big-hearted, human man gone back along the path of life until he is a little boy again, when it is a bigger thing to ride on his father's shoulder, or tramp at his heels, or sit on his knee and listen to stories than to be the king of the mightiest nation on earth. He is back again a tired little boy who has run to seek his mother, and it is better to snuggle up in her arms, and have her kisses on his cheek, and hear the sweet words of comfort from her lips than to be visited by all the queens of Sheba since the world began. This little touch of nature makes Solomon "mighty kin to us," as Roosevelt would put it.

We must not any of us put this little picture of Solomon's heart memory away as not applicable as an illustration for us, because Solomon was a king and we just ordinary citizens. That does not make any difference. As Robert Burns would say, "A man's a man for a' that." It is easy to understand that Solomon must have had a

pretty interesting childhood—a far more interesting one than most young princes have nowadays. David must have been a very fascinating man to have for a father. He was not born a king, but was brought up a shepherd lad in the hills of Bethlehem. He was doubtless full of stories of struggles with wild beasts in the protection of his flocks. Then, after he was grown, after he had slain Goliath, the giant, and had played his harp before the king until the mad king in his jealousy threw a javelin at him, he had had long years of exile in the wilderness and in the mountains. He had been surrounded by a devoted band of the bravest, most faithful soldiers then in the world—a band of heroes who carried their lives in their hands gladly for David's sake. Surely Solomon's boyhood must have been enriched with the stories of heroism and adventure that were poured into his childish ears by his father.

But David was more than a soldier of fortune. He was a poet. The man who wrote the twenty-third Psalm can stand alongside of Shakespeare or any other man that ever lived, as a poet. David was a man of devotion, a man of prayer, with a sensitive heart

toward God, and such teaching as he would give to this son, whom he desired to leave as his successor, we can imagine to be of noble inspiration and lofty spiritual exaltation.

Tho David was a king, he was evidently a tender-hearted, loving father. There could not be anything more pathetic, and there is not in all the literature of sorrow anything sadder, than the cry of David on that day of Absalom's doom, when the old king went up into the chamber over the gate crying: "O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

David evidently learned wisdom by this sad failure with his older son, and gave to Solomon far more personal attention. And Solomon's mother, tho she was a queen and had many duties, was a real mother to her child, and gave him an atmosphere of love in his boyhood that was like a spring of living water to refresh and comfort his soul on many a trying day in after life.

But it does not take a palace, with obsequious servants and soldiers standing on guard at the gates, to make a home. And

a man does not need to be a poet, or a statesman, or to have had the picturesque history of David in order to be a kind and wise and loving father. And a woman does not need to be the wife of a king to be the kind of mother that makes all sainthood seem possible to her children.

Now, I know that there are many pictures coming into your minds while I speak these words. Shall I interpret them by describing the picture that is in my own mind? I see a log cabin up in the oak hills, a few miles from the Willamette River in Oregon. They are not great mountains, only hills of Bethlehem, but beautiful. All the people about that cabin work hard every day to get a living. My father is up and out in the morning often before day, and is seldom through his work until long after the darkness. My mother not only does the ordinary work connected with a large family of children, but she spins the wool that makes our clothing, and knits all our stockings with her own hand. There are no luxuries there. I do not suppose in those early days there was fifty dollars in money seen about that cabin in a year, all put together. But I will guar-

antee that Solomon had no happier memories of his home, in the palace with King David and his mother, than I have of my father and mother in that log cabin. Love was there in abundance. Kindly Christian brotherhood and fellowship were there. The stranger always found a welcome. The man or the family in sickness or need never made a call here that was unheeded. And the atmosphere of that log cabin was one of worship. My father led the singing at all the meetings through the scattered settlements round about, and how many evenings in my boyhood have I known the pioneer settlers to gather from five miles around to our cabin to sing together the old hymns of Christian worship. There was a Bible there in that log house that had come across the plains in a canvas-back prairie schooner, hauled by oxen. It had been six months on the road. They had gathered round the camp-fire morning and evening to read out of its holy pages, sometimes when they were in imminent peril of their lives from savage Indians. My father used to read out of that Bible morning and evening. The evening worship stands out most clearly in my mind. The great wide

fireplace, with its huge fire of oak logs—a little pitch thrown on to make a better light—and my father, sitting with that old Bible on his knee in the flickering firelight is the most abiding photograph that I have of all those early days. If father was away from home, mother read from that Book of books, and prayed with her children.

A year or so ago I went back to that home of my boyhood to see the old familiar scenes that I had not looked on for over thirty years. A great many things were changed, but I went down to the spring that gushed out a little way below the house of my childhood, and I found that that was the same as ever. There was the white sand huddling up at the bottom just as it used to do when it first awakened my childish interest. And as I slaked my thirst at the old spring I stood and looked out a little beyond it, where in my boyhood there used to be a thicket of wild undergrowth trees. And as I looked a picture came into my mind—I saw myself and my younger sisters as we stood hushed and silent, with a feeling of awe in our hearts.

We used to stand there again and again

in the afternoons of long ago and listen to the sound of prayer that came from that thicket. About four o'clock every afternoon we used to stand there and listen to mother. Sometimes when the day had been hard and trying and the burdens heavy to carry, we would hear the sound of weeping, and our own soft young hearts would be touched to tears. But as mother prayed the weeping would cease, and after a while she would begin to sing some song of confidence and trust. Then the burden rolled away from our own young hearts and life seemed infinitely glad again, as she came out from that place of prayer, not only with songs on her lips, but with a face radiant with a light "that never was, on sea or land." Do you blame me that I would not exchange the memory of that childhood and that home life, plain and common and poor as it was in material things, for the memory of a youth lived in the richest palace on the earth?

Now I know as I have been telling you this story of my own heart, you have all been going back into your lives, and memory has been busy bringing back to you faces

and forms in your own photograph gallery. You have looked again on the face of your father. You have nestled again in your mother's arms. Brother, sister, childhood's friends, some of them long since passed into heaven, have come back and looked into your eyes. I pray God they may stay with you, and that these tender memories may be to your soul a sweet and heavenly benediction. They are the kind of memories we want to keep with us through life.

When Mr. Froude went through the letters of Thomas Carlyle, he found one endorsed with a trembling hand, "My last letter to my mother." And in the course of that letter, all of which has the ring of a noble nature about it, were these sentences: "I am now grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for so many years, but there is nothing I ever had to be so thankful for as the mother I had. May God reward you, my dearest mother; I never can." There are many of us who feel like that, but I wonder if we express it as frequently as we should.

Many of you here are far away from home. Father and mother are hundreds and it may

be thousands of miles distant, yet how often you are in their thoughts. Being away such a distance, it is easy to get out of the habit of writing with any great regularity. How many sad hearts there must be in the East because of young men and young women in Denver who have ceased to write home save at long intervals. My friend, how long since you wrote your father or your mother and told of the tender gratitude that is welling up in your soul toward them? You would gladly speak of it to me if you had opportunity, and you do not hesitate to speak of it again and again to the merest acquaintances. And yet that tender bosom on which you pillowed your helpless head in your babyhood often aches with loneliness because you fail to pour out the love and gratitude that really is in your heart. I am sure there are some here that ought to go home this Sunday night and before sleeping write letters, loving, tender, grateful letters, to the dear ones of the old family flock. You will be making acquaintances and friends all your life long, but you will never find anybody else like that old gray-haired father. You may come to know wiser men, and greater men, but no one

else who will so typify God to you. Be good to your father. And you will get acquainted with other women, women more handsome, doubtless, and more fashionable, and with a keener wit; but you will never have but one mother, and there never will be anybody else like her. No one will stir your heart to the depths as she does. There will be no one whose love will be so entirely unselfish. Be good to your mother. Pour your love out to her. It will not be for long, perhaps, and, when the great sunset comes to your parents, what happiness it will be for you to remember the love with which you ministered to them.

And those brothers and sisters who grew up in the same home nest with you. How long since you have written to them? Are you keeping the family bond fresh and strong by remembrance and close and tender fellowship? Oh, the waste of selfishness! In no place does selfishness stab us with a deeper wound than when, in the hurry and rush of our lives after money and possessions, we lose the tender, kindly fellowship with father and mother and brother and sister and friend.

It seems to me that our study this evening ought to awaken in our hearts a divine homesickness for all pure and holy things. I remember an incident of my life in New York. It is the story of an old Texan who looked out of the window of his Broadway office and eyed the trees in Trinity churchyard wistfully, and said: "It's this soft hinting weather" (for it was springtime) "that has crept into me. That's nature. Why," continued the old Southerner, "the very cattle on the range get restless on such days and break away. If the boys miss any of the herd in the early spring they don't fool around wondering where the brutes have gone. They know that the place to find them is on the range where they were born. I've known steers to go across country, straight as a die, through all kinds of obstacles, back to their old range. Horses will do the same thing. I've had wild mustangs break away in the night and make tracks for the place where they were foaled. So I'm homesick for Texas. But I am homesick for something further back than that. I've been sitting here at my desk, and every little while, without any reason or warning, I would find a

shallow pebbly stream running across my ledger and shutting out the figures, while there by the inkstand a dirty little chap would lie on the bank, fishing with an old hickory rod. I don't believe I ever caught a fish in that creek, but I was a tremendous optimist. Homesick weather, I call it."

My dear friends, I shall be happy if our study together breeds in all your hearts a homesickness for the old Bible, and the sweet faith, and the love, and the pure hopes and ideals and innocence of childhood. If you have gotten far away from them, then I pray that, like the prodigal in Christ's story, you may "come to yourself," and remember the great heart of love and tenderness which your Heavenly Father has for you, and may be inspired to begin the homeward journey toward forgiveness and welcome even here and now!

KEEPING GUARD OVER THE HEART

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”—Prov. 4: 23.

THERE is a marginal rendering of this text suggested by the translators which adds a good deal of strength. If we were to use that, the text would read like this: “Keep thy heart above all that thou guardest; for out of it are the issues of life.” The heart is the center of human life. The writer of the text by its peculiar phraseology suggests the idea of a reservoir. He urges us to guard our hearts above everything else that we need to guard, because of the streams which flow out from it. These streams are suggested in the verses which follow. Thus the whole paragraph reads: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Make level the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil." So, in the thought of the writer, one stream flows away from the heart through the mouth and the lips in the form of speech; and another stream flows off through the eyes in the things we see and pursue with our sight; and still another stream flows away along the track of our feet in our deeds. The heart is the source of them all. Does not the Scripture say, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"? And it is as true that the eyes seek to feed themselves upon and delight themselves in that which the heart prompts. And the things that we cherish in our hearts will soon be the things our feet pursue, and which will be crystallized in our deeds.

I have been told that in the building of one of the great railroads of the East, the engineers who laid it out and the contractors who built it were paid by the mile, and consequently they put in many curves which ought to have been avoided. This story does not seem probable, but the fact remains that hundreds of trains, and thousands of passengers, and many carloads of freight have

had to go around those curves every day for fifty years, causing an enormous and ever-increasing loss. For several years the railroad company has been cutting out these curves and straightening the line, at an expense of millions of dollars.

So the writer of our text would suggest to us that every bad habit is a curve, which comes from a defect in the heart. We should be careful of the lines upon which our lives are laid out. The line of life is at first flexible and movable, and can be run anywhere; but once it is imbedded and ballasted in the soil and rock of habit, it becomes a fixture, and may become a finality. Any curve put in the life of a boy or a girl in their youth imposes itself upon all the traffic of life that passes over that line. If in learning your business by which you get your living you learn to do some part of your work in a roundabout, clumsy way, every time you do that work you will travel around that curve, at an increased cost of time and trouble. If you form evil habits in the way of deceit, then throughout all your life, unless the heart back of it be regenerated, you will travel around lying curves. If you form the habit

of self-indulgence through strong drink, you thrust yourself upon a curve which in all probability will resemble the writhings of a serpent. And so illustrations might be suggested in every department of life. The heart is the citadel, it is the power-house, it is the reservoir, the fountain of our lives, and we need to guard it above all the things we guard.

In the first place, we ought to guard our hearts to keep them full of earnest and wholesome purpose. Next to a wicked heart, full of aggressive, evil things, in point of danger, stands the empty heart. A few miles from where I lived when I was a little boy there was an old flour-mill on the bank of a slender stream. The miller had a mill-dam up above the mill, and he brought the water down when he needed it through a flume and turned it on his wheel and made it furnish power to grind out the flour for the neighborhood. He used to take his toll out of the wheat that was poured into the hopper, and that was the way he got his living. He was a kind, genial old man, and I used to like to talk to him when I had ridden in on horseback with a bag of wheat before me, which

I was to take back again in the form of flour. One day he was telling me that he had been so busy for several weeks that he had kept the mill running day and night. I asked him how he managed to do that, and he said that was easy enough. He would fill his hopper full of wheat and lie down and immediately go to sleep, and would sleep sound as a log until the hopper ran empty, and the great stone burrs, having no wheat between them, began to grind on each other, and that awakened him in an instant. The old miller's explanation has stayed with me all through life, as an illustration of the danger of an empty heart. A full hopper in the mill, plenty of good wheat between the burrs, meant the turning out of good flour and bread to feed the people; but an empty hopper and empty burrs meant disaster. So, my friend, a heart full of good purpose to do right and to fulfil the mission for which God created you, means that day by day the grist of your life in speech and in conduct shall be wholesome, pleasing to God, and a blessing to your fellow men.

Let us not forget that the heart is a power for good or for ill. A bad heart means the

machinery of life turned into evil ways—power, but malicious and wicked. A good heart at full tide means all the machinery of life running day and night to bring to pass things that are worth while among men. You can not do much unless your heart is in a thing. When Wilberforce, the great apostle of liberty in Europe, was turning the world upside-down, one man asked another, “What is the secret of the power of Wilberforce? There are many men with more brains and more culture.” And his friends answered, “The secret of Wilberforce is that he has a heart full of sympathy.” And that is the secret of multitudes of people who are doing great good in the world. Do not keep guard over your heart with the purpose only of keeping bad things out of it, but keep watch over it to see that the fountains of sympathy and brotherly kindness are open and flowing day by day.

Do you ask how you can do that? I say to you, accustom yourself to putting yourself in your neighbor’s place, and compel yourself to show sympathy in the service of every afflicted or unfortunate man or woman or child who is within your reach. You may

not always be able to serve in the way of money, but you can always serve in the way of the kind word or the sympathetic, kindly attention, which oftentimes does more to cure the hurts of life than any amount of money. Believe me that the heart will fill up with sympathy more from one deed of kindness and good fellowship than it will from any amount of reveries and day-dreams.

It is well to emphasize the fact to yourself that the thing you do every day, and set your thought and attention upon, to the exclusion of other things, will finally fill all your heart. Dr. Wayland Hoyt tells the story of a wicked sea-captain who sailed into a mission station on the Pacific Ocean, and the missionary sought conversation with him concerning his personal religion. The captain answered: "I came away from Nantucket after whales. I have sailed around Cape Horn for whales. I am now up in the North Pacific Ocean after whales. I fear your labor would be entirely lost upon me, and I ought to be honest with you. I care for nothing by day but whales, and I dream of nothing at night but whales. If you should open my heart, I think you would find the

shape of a small sperm whale there." That sea-captain's life was as his heart was. And is it not true of some of you, that you have left the gates of your hearts unguarded and that greed, or love of pleasure, or sensual indulgence have come in and little by little enlarged themselves until they have crowded out of your hearts everything else, and now master and control you?

I have not said much about keeping guard over your heart for the purpose of keeping evil things out, because I think the negative way of keeping the heart wholesome is not nearly so good as the positive way. It is a lonely thing standing on guard in the darkness to keep an enemy from going into a house that stands empty. But it is a very different thing in association with strong, brave friends that fill every room in the house, which is well lighted and warmed and full of comfort, to undertake to hold the house against capture. That is the difference between trying to lead a good life by standing guard over yourself to keep yourself from doing wrong, and the throwing of your whole heart and soul into doing the things that are true and beautiful and good.

I know of a gentleman, and in many ways he was a real gentleman, who had fallen into the habit of profanity. If there is a useless and utterly ungentlemanly habit, it is the habit of profanity. He was disgusted with himself and tried to give it up. He used to start from his house in the morning determined not to let a profane word pass from his lips, but before he got to the end of the square something had occurred, the profane word had been spoken, and he was utterly ashamed. He tried, and tried, and tried, but did not succeed. He fought the evil thing, but it was too much for him, and at last he gave himself, just as he was, into the hands of Jesus Christ. Just as he was, he crowned Jesus Christ utterly over the heart, intellect, and will. And his pastor relates of it, that a little later he rose in the prayer-meeting and gave this testimony: "My friends, I do not understand myself. Some of you know how I have been addicted to the habit of profanity. Some of you know how I have been struggling against it. But I gave myself to Jesus Christ, and now I do not understand myself why I do not want to be profane. When I love Him, and love

what He loves and hate what He hates, it is not hard any more. I am victor.”

And you may depend upon it that the same principle applies in every sphere where we may be tempted to do evil. The way to triumph is to keep the heart so full of the good purpose that you give the evil no place for standing-room.

A successful manufacturer tells this story of an engineer who wanted to take the manufacturer's stationary engine, because he could get no employment on the railroads. The manufacturer talked with the superintendent of the road from which the engineer had been removed and found that the one fault in the man's life was his love for strong drink. The superintendent said that he was a most valuable man, had saved many lives by his quickness and bravery; but he could not let liquor alone, and for that reason he had been discharged. In spite of the discouraging report, the manufacturer hired the man. During the first week of his stay he passed through the engine-room many times a day, in the course of his factory route, but never found anything amiss. The great engine ran as smoothly and quietly as if the

bearings were set in velvet; the steel cross-head, the crank-shaft, the brass oil-cups, reflected the morning sun like mirrors; no speck of dust found lodging in the room. In the fire-room the same order and neatness prevailed; the steam-gage showed even pressure; the water-gages were always just right, and the daily report showed that they were burning less coal than formerly. The most critical inspector failed to find anything about either engine or boilers that showed the faintest symptoms of neglect or carelessness. Several weeks passed. The man who had been recommended as one who would work for five days, then be drunk for two days, had not swerved a hair from his duty. The gossips about the factory were beginning to notice and comment on the strange affair.

“I should like to speak with you a moment, sir,” said the engineer one morning, as his employer passed through the engine-room.

“Well, John, what now?” he said, drawing out his note-book. “Cylinder oil all gone?”

“No,” replied the engineer, “it is about myself.”

The manufacturer motioned him to pro-

ceed, and this is what he said: "Thirty-two years ago I drank my first glass of liquor, and steadily increased in the drink habit for many years. For the past ten years, up to last month, no week has passed without a Saturday night drunk. During those years I was not blind to the fact that appetite was getting a frightful hold on me. At times my struggles against the longing for stimulants were earnest; my employers once offered me a thousand dollars if I would not touch liquor for three months, but I lost it; I tried all sorts of antidotes, and all failed. My wife died praying that I might be rescued, yet my promises to her were broken within two days. I signed pledges and joined societies, but appetite was still my master. My employers reasoned with me, discharged me, forgave me, but all to no effect. I could not stop, and I knew it. When I came to work for you I did not expect to stay a week; I was nearly done for; but now!"—and the old man's face lighted up with an unspeakable joy—"in this extremity, when I was ready to plunge into hell for a glass of liquor, I found a sure remedy! I am saved from my appetite!"

“What is your remedy?” asked the employer, with great emotion.

The old engineer took up an open Bible that lay, face down, on the window-ledge, and read, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”

Now, if there be any among you who have been fighting a losing fight to save a heart already captured by evil, I preach to you the Gospel that saved this engineer from his terrible enemy. But you who have not yet come under this cruel dominion of evil habit, I urge that in your young manhood, in your opening womanhood, you open the doors of your heart to Jesus Christ, that He may dwell in your affections, and be King over all your thoughts, so that in the beauty and glory of His dominion you shall not only live worthily in the world, but shall abide in His peace.

A SUCCESSFUL TRAVELER

“He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.”—Prov. 10: 9.

THE paragraph which follows this statement of the text reveals to us clearly that it is the inner walk of the soul, the progress of our spiritual personality, which is here characterized. The body is treated as a screen upon which to throw the pictures of the soul. It is a graphic portrait which is given here, or rather a series of living pictures: “The wise in heart shall receive commandments, but a prating fool shall fall. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow. . . . The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all transgressions. In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found; but a rod is for the

back of him that is void of understanding." And so on throughout the chapter Solomon paints these pictures of life, which indicate in an outward way the character of the soul within.

It is important in our study of this theme to lay down as a foundation-stone of our thought that a man's walk, his outward conduct, must in the long run be governed by the quality of the soul, the character of the man within. We are not nearly so much the creatures of circumstance as we are likely to think. Men make circumstances, and it is the quality of the man which dictates the kind of influence circumstance shall have upon him.

I have been reading a very interesting discussion of the fact that the internal temperature of the human body is constant during health, whatever may be the climatic surroundings. That is a very interesting fact. If you watch the thermometer outside of your window you will note that the movements of the column of mercury are very capricious. It is very inconstant. In twenty-four hours it moves through a wide range of degrees on the scale. But a man may live out-of-

doors day and night and his vital processes maintain a temperature within him that is constant to a minute fraction of a degree. A man may travel from the arctic regions to the tropics; outer changes of heat are great, but he carries his own temperature with him. More than this, the physician using the clinical thermometer does not have to allow for individual peculiarities in his patients, nor even to consider the wide differences of race. On the street of any cosmopolitan city, stop men at random and, whatever their habits, disposition, color, or race, if they are in health, the clinical thermometer will tell the same story for each of them.

The vital processes which maintain our temperature were established long ago, before the one race became the many races. Our sensations of being warm and cold are exceedingly superficial. They do not affect this fundamental fact which is constant from youth to old age, and from pole to pole, and from the remote savage to the modern civilized man. The essentially significant thing about all this is that we have processes within our beings that are so independent of

outer circumstances. When these vital processes cease in death, there is a surrender to circumstances, but not before.

Now we have here a striking illustration of the fact that a normal, healthy soul, untarnished by sin, that is obedient to God and lives in an inner atmosphere of love and purity, maintains its own spiritual temperature, whatever may be the spiritual climate which surrounds it. All history and all observation are full of illustrations of this truth. David, persecuted, hunted like a wild beast, tempted by every sort of evil thing, bravely sings his shepherd song, and reveals to us the spiritual temperature that is undisturbed by his surroundings when he exclaims: "Tho I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." And Paul, after his experience of shipwrecks, and the whipping-post, and the dungeon, walks steadily toward the executioner's block, his spiritual temperature in no degree lowered by these outward surroundings, quietly declaring, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the

glory which shall be revealed in us." And again we hear him saying, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Now, I know that it is a very common thing for a young man or a young woman to offer their surrounding circumstances as an excuse for all sorts of delinquencies in their moral conduct, but when we get down to the bottom of things, it is really no excuse at all. It is not necessary that any one of us should be governed in our walk by the sort of people we walk with along the paths of life. If our characters are true and upright, and we walk the way of obedience to God, and do the work He has given us to do, our moral temperature need not vary and will not vary with the surrounding social atmosphere.

Let us also emphasize the teaching of our text, that there is no man who can walk so steadily and so safely forward to meet everything that the future may hold in store as the man who is conscious of his own rectitude of soul, his own righteousness of purpose. There is no man so bold as he who is conscious that he is right, that there is no stain

upon his hands; he can afford to defy everything that comes against him.

David, on one of his days of loftiest vision, beheld the watchman on the summit of the hill of the Lord, keeping guard over the holy place, the citadel of God, and he cried aloud to the watchman: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?"

And the watchman answered: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

Then David drew back and watched, and there came a great procession, beautiful and glorious beyond description. It was the chariot of the King, and the heralds preceded it, and they shouted to the watchmen:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Back rings the challenge: "Who is this King of glory?" And the response is: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Again goes forth the cry: "Who is this King of glory?" And as the King enters, the whole City of God shouts: "The Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory."

According to David's vision it is only the man with clean hands and a pure heart who shall finally stand unashamed and uncondemned in the presence of God. How, then, is it possible for a man who has sinned, whose hands have been tarnished, and whose heart has been defiled to show that kind of uprightness which shall walk the way of life surely? This whole Christmas time, with its story of the Christ, is full of the answer to this query. The writer of the Book of Hebrews answers it in these words: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." That is Paul's idea of a bold, good man. Here in the West we often hear about the "bold, bad man," but there is no man so truly bold as the bold good man, and this Scripture declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, offered in atoning love for us, if truly accepted by us, makes us bold to go into the very presence of God. We could have no standing in God's presence on our own merit. God

hates sin, and can not look upon it with any degree of allowance. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is the divine law. Yet we are all conscious of sin. We know that we have come short of our privileges and have done that which is wrong. God has been good to us, and we have received His blessings—and have taken them as a matter of course without thanks. After having eaten at His table, and taken our very lives from His hands, how often we have taken the bit between our teeth, like a runaway horse, and gone our own way as tho we owed God nothing in the way of obedience. How would we dare come into the presence of God, the Judge of all the earth, with the white tablet of a pure heart and an innocent conscience, which was given to us in childhood, defiled and unholy? Anger and hate and envy and jealousy have made their blots upon its pages. In our imaginations are impure and wicked pictures. Hanging on the walls of our memories are paintings that would shame us and shock us and humiliate us if they were exhibited to the gaze of the men and women whom we meet every day, and yet all these are known to God. He has seen every one of these

shameful pictures. He has looked into every vengeful and vicious purpose. He has noted all. How, then, could we dare to enter into the holy place and stand in the presence of the living God? Ah, who would dare? I know Shakespeare says: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," but no man would be fool enough, with an evil conscience, to rush willingly into the presence of his Maker. The white light of that pure Face would blast him into blindness.

How, then, may we have boldness to enter into the holiest? And again we come back to Paul's answer, "By the blood of Jesus." There was no other good enough or great enough to intervene in our behalf. There was no man who had not sinned himself; and if there had been one who had never sinned, still he could only do his own duty and give God all his love and all his service, which would be only the right thing to give to his Heavenly Father. No angel could come and throw himself into the breach and make peace for us, for he has an angel's duty to perform and an angel's mission to fill. So, when there was no one who could come and save man from his sin and his banishment, "God so

loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And so Christ came, and He was born under the law that He might redeem us who are under the law. He suffered all the experiences of mankind. He was hungry and tired and thirsty and lonely; was abused and insulted, and beaten and killed, thus knowing how to succor us when we are tempted, because He was tempted in all places like as we are. And finally He went to the cross for us. He gave His own life as our ransom. In the old time a lamb was slain and offered up for the sins of the sinner. Jesus was "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He offered Himself on our behalf, and He ever lives at the right hand of God on high to make intercession for us.

Who, then, is the bold good man of that character of uprightness, that he may walk safely and surely on through all the temptations and dangers of life, on through the valley and the shadow of death without fear, and stand unchallenged in the light of the throne of judgment? It is not the man who has never sinned. It is not the self-righteous

man who thanks God that he is more just and holy than other people. Oh, no. It is the sinner, who, having no confidence in his own merit, accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, and enters the holy place trusting only in the blood of Jesus which was shed in his behalf.

Luther once paid a pastoral visit to a young man who was in his last illness, and one of the first inquiries he made was, "What do you think you can take to God, in whose presence you are so shortly to appear?"

With striking confidence, the youth at once replied: "Everything that is good, dear father—everything that is good!"

"But how can you bring him everything good, seeing that you are but a poor sinner?" anxiously asked the great reformer.

"Dear father," at once added the young man, "I will take to my God in heaven a penitent, humble heart, sprinkled with the blood of Christ."

Luther's face burst into smiles and he said: "Truly this is everything good. Go, dear son; you will be a welcome guest to God."

And so, as I plead with you who are not Christians, to forsake your sins and enter

into the holy of holies of a new and glorious spiritual life, if you ask me, "What can I take to God so that I shall not fear being spurned from the divine presence?" I reply, "Bring to God a penitent, humble heart, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and you may be sure that you will be a welcome guest to God." And God will give you the assurance of faith, so that you will not only walk the way of life surely, but with courage.

On one of our warships there was a solitary sailor, who, having this full assurance of faith, was bold to own himself a follower of Christ. For a long time he was alone; no other sailor joined him. His place of prayer was necessarily amid the noise and din of the sailors. One evening he perceived a shadow by the side of the gun where he knelt. Another Jack tar was creeping along and said, "May I come?" Oh, the joy of the young sailor to have a comrade with him! They met for many nights behind the gun, reading the Bible and praying. They became the butt of the men in two or three messes, but still continued, bearing and forbearing. Finally an evil-spirited man went and told the commander, who was a Roman

Catholic, expecting that he would punish them, or at least not permit them to hold services again. But he was a noble-hearted man, and the moment he heard that two of his sailors were meeting for Bible reading and prayer behind one of the guns, he sent for one of them, and instantly ordered a portion of the lower deck to be curtained off for their meeting-place, and gave orders that no one should molest them. For some nights the two were the only occupants. But by-and-by the curtain was opened, and a blue-jacket said, "May I come in?" He was welcome. Another came, and another, until thirty-two converted men gathered daily on that warship to read God's Word and worship Him together. Surely in this Christmas season, when we think of Him who "was rich, and yet for our sakes became poor," who dared put aside the glory of heaven and bear all earth's sorrows for us, the love of Christ should constrain us to yield our whole soul and body to do His will. If we will so surrender ourselves to Him, through His dear love we shall come into that uprightness of soul that will make all our walk in life sure and safe.

THE ROMANCE OF A FAT SOUL

“The liberal soul shall be made fat.”—Prov. 11: 25.

THERE is a story of a mountain cañon through which ran a little stream that gurgled and splashed and sang its way over the boulders and under the ferns down the mountain side, shining like a thread of silver where now and again the sun reached it, hurrying on to bear its tribute to the river. Soon after it left the mountains, it passed a stagnant pool, and the pool called to it: “Whither away, little stream?” “I am going to the river to bear this cup of water God has given to me.” “Ah! you are very foolish to do that; you had better keep it for your own use; you’ll need it before the summer is over. It has been a backward spring, and we shall have a hot summer to pay for it—you will dry up then.” “Well,” said the little stream, “if I am to die so soon, I had

better work while the day lasts. If I am likely to lose this treasure from the heat, I had better do good with it while I have it." So away through the cañon and the pastures, and afterward through the meadows and the fields it helped to make green, ran the little stream, and everybody who saw it smiled, and every one who slaked his thirst at its fragrant side rejoiced and blest it. The pool that had given it advice smiled complacently at its own superior foresight and held back every cupful of water, not letting a drop slip away that it could help. A little later the hot summer heat came down, and it fell upon the little stream. But it had its source away back there on the side of the high mountain where it came gushing out between two great rocks from a vast hidden reservoir in the heart of the backbone of the continent—a reservoir that was filled by the melting of the snows up above, and it did not dry up.

The trees crowded to its brink, and threw out their sheltering branches over it when the days were hot, for it brought refreshment and life to them; and the sun peeped through the branches, and smiled

gently upon its dimpled face, and seemed to say, "It is not in my heart to harm you"; and the birds wet their beaks in its silver tide and sang its praises; the flowers breathed their perfume upon its bosom; the horses and the cattle and the sheep loved to linger by its banks; the farmer's eye was always joyous as he looked on the line of verdant beauty that marked its course through his fields and meadows—and so on it went, bringing verdure and blossom and life and happiness wherever it passed. It blest everybody and everybody blest it. It was always giving and yet it was always full. It poured its little tide of pure water into the river, and the river poured it on to the sea, and the sea welcomed it, and the sun smiled upon the sea, and the sea sent up its incense to greet the sun, and the clouds caught in their capacious bosom the incense from the sea, and the winds, like waiting steeds, caught the chariots of the clouds and bore them away over plain and hill and valley to that same great mountain that gave this little stream its birth; and there they poured out their loads of moisture in the form of snow upon the mountain top. And so God saw to it that

the little stream, tho it poured its water forth so generously and so freely, never ran dry.

And what about the selfish pool? Alas! It lay there in the heat, lazy and selfish, doing nothing except trying to care for itself, and the green slime came on the top, and it became stagnant and filthy until even the winds that caressed it by mistake carried away ague on their wings. And so it sickened and died.

My friends, this is a parable of life, illustrating the message of our text. It is only the liberal soul that can grow fat. We must not mix up in our thoughts a fat body with a fat soul. There have been many men whose bodies were fat and flourishing but whose souls were thin as a scarecrow's. Goliath had a tremendous body. He was over eleven feet high and he could carry a spear like a weaver's beam. He was fat and flourishing in the body, but the shepherd lad, who had learned to trust God as he kept his flocks among the hills of Bethlehem, far outranked him when souls were put in the scales. David had a slender, delicate, ruddy-cheeked body, but he had a great soul—the soul of a giant. Goliath had a giant's body, but he had the

soul of a dwarf. So there are many people to-day whose bodies are healthy and wholesome and well-fed; their bodies are kept sleek and perfumed; they keep themselves as well curried as any man keeps his thoroughbred horse; but if you were to go into the chamber of the soul and see its condition you would be astonished! You would be reminded of the story which Jesus tells us about the rich farmer who had such splendid crops that he determined to build new barns to get room to store away his harvest, and then he said to himself that he would say after the new barns were done and the grain all in: "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." And Jesus said that night that rich farmer got a new name. It came stinging, like a flash of lightning from heaven. "Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?" The old farmer was a fool, not because he had a big barn and a good farm and fine crops, but because he thought he could feed his soul on these things. There is where the folly lies. And there are plenty of men about this city who have large accounts in the

banks, and who need a large vault in the safe-deposit building to hold the title deeds to their goods, who are living in the same kind of folly, because they have fat bodies but lean souls.

You remember the old story of Joseph's time, how the seven fat kine came up out of the river into the meadow and following them came up seven lean, skinny beasts, and they ate up the fat ones, and they were just as lean and skinny and bony as they were before. Many people are illustrating that every day of the world. A man gives himself over to selfish acquirement, simply to gather goods and get on successfully in his physical life, forgetting everything that is higher and holier, and he becomes skinny and lean in his soul. Year after year God pours out upon him opportunities and privileges for the development of mind and heart, for the enlarging of intelligence and of sympathy and good fellowship, the building up of reverence and worship, but for these things he cares not. If you speak to him of them he says, "I am too busy. My business takes all of my time. I am so tired I have no time to think of religion and such things." And so he eats up

the fat kine of life's best years, and gets skinnier and leaner at soul every year that passes over his head. Oh, my friend, life is a poor mean thing if it is to go on like that.

That is a very striking sentence connected with our text. It is written by Solomon as an illustration of the text. It tells how the liberal soul shall be made fat, and declares that if we water another soul and bring it refreshment and comfort, the result will be that our own souls are watered. I well remember in a great Eastern city, where I once was a pastor, a maiden lady who lived alone. Her relatives had largely passed away, and her freshness had withered, seemingly both in body and in soul, until she was prematurely old in appearance. But a sudden death among her friends left a little girl alone and friendless. It came about in such a way that this lonely woman had her heart stirred to its profoundest depths in pity for the little orphan child, and a new impulse was born in her soul. She took the friendless waif to her own home and to the amazement of everybody that knew her, adopted the child as her own. I removed a little while later to another city—did not see her for a number of years.

In the meanwhile the little girl had grown to be a woman. I went back to preach at a re-opening of the old church, and whom should I find there but this one-time lonely, withered woman, but now fresh and buoyant and full of hope and love and purpose, with this fine young woman looking into her face with all the tender gratitude of a noble child to her mother. I shall never forget what that woman said to me as she introduced me again to her adopted daughter. Said she: "Many people said I was a fool when I adopted a little girl, but it was the wisest thing I ever did in my life. What would I be now if I had gone on the way I was going, thinking only of myself? My life has broadened and I have been getting happier every year, and it has been a glorious thing for me that I have had somebody to work for and think about other than myself." She had watered that little homeless child, and refreshed and comforted by it, the child had grown into a beautiful woman, but all the while she in turn had poured back streams of love and hope and courage into the heart of the woman who had befriended her.

Our theme ought to teach us that our lives

are to grow rich and strong not because many people are helping us, not because, like the grafting politician, we have a "pull" on strong friends, but because, by the grace of God, we have learned the art of being helpful to others. The greatest man is not the man whom the most people labor to care for, but the man who can bear most burdens on his shoulders for the comfort of his fellow men and the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth.

On one occasion, during my very young manhood, I had occasion to ask the governor of one of the far western states for his help in a matter of great interest to me. He gave me his assistance at the cost of a large outlay of time and attention, and in a spirit at once so gracious and so sympathetic as to win my lifelong gratitude. When the matter was finally concluded, I express my regret that I had caused him so much trouble. I have always remembered his reply: "My boy," for he was a venerable man, "when I accepted the office of governor, I agreed to be the most helpful man in the State; and that is what I am here for." Surely that is the Christian idea, that service and power

belong together. And we need to keep that ideal before our minds.

We must learn this also, that our souls must grow fat and flourish through doing the very best we can with what we have. Abel did not have much with which he could serve God in the morning of the world, but he took the best lamb in the flock and offered it up as a burnt offering before God, and the sweet smell of Abel's sacrifice and faithful life has been filling the air all along down through thousands of years of history.

Moses is coming home with his sheep, with his shepherd staff in his hand, when God meets him face to face. And when he tells the Almighty of his weakness, God asks him what it is he has in his hand, and he holds forth that staff, and God sends him forth to use it for him, and that staff becomes powerful enough to bring water out of the dry rock of the desert, and to open the path for deliverance through the depths of the sea.

Mary spent all the money she had, no doubt, for that costly alabaster box of precious perfume which she carried and put on the head of her Lord, but that pot of fragrance has been enough to sweeten the

whole world, and grows in pungency every year.

A poor widow with only two mites dropt them in the treasury of the synagog where Jesus waited, and the story of her generosity still stirs the heart of mankind. So I say to you, use the opportunity you have to do the world good. Bless those that are within your reach, and your soul shall fatten and flourish as you feed upon soul food in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

The daughter of Dr. Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, when she was a wee bit of a girl, came to him on one of his birthdays and said, "Father, I have brought you a present." She gave him a piece of wood with a knitting-needle stuck in the middle of it and a pin in each end, and a piece of cotton fastened from the needle to the pins. He said, "What is it?" She said, "Father, don't you know? It is a missionary ship." That piece of stick, you say, will carry no missionary; but it did—it carried her at last. Long years afterward she came to him one morning in China, and said, "Father, it is your birthday—I have brought a present for you. Here is the first woman I have

led to Christ in China." How did she begin? By giving out of what she had in the atmosphere of what she desired. As a little girl she knew a missionary ship was the one thing in all the world that her father would love to possess, and she made one. You laugh at it, but God kissed the stick and the knitting-needle, until it became a passion for souls, and she won a multitude of souls for Christ in China. Her soul grew fat and flourishing because it poured itself out unstintingly for others.

My dear friends, I call you to this higher life of the soul. Do not make your body fat, or your pocket-book fat, or even your intelligence fat at the price of a lean and starving soul. If our souls are to grow and flourish, we must through prayer and reverent worship keep them sensitive to God and to spiritual things.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, many years ago, when Jenny Lind was singing in this country, went to hear her in the great oratorio, "The Messiah." In the next seat was an old sea-captain, who asked the preacher to point out the great singer. After a chorus or two and a few solos, Jenny Lind sang, "Come unto Me,

all ye that labor and are heavy laden." As she sang the heavens seemed to open, and the great audience heard not her, but the Christ, calling down the ages, "Come unto Me." As she finished a silence more eloquent than applause hushed the audience. Dr. Abbott, hearing a harsh guttural sound, turned, and to his amazement, the old sea-captain was snoring. There was nothing in him to which the music appealed. Oh, my friends, do not starve that within you to which God and Christ and eternal things can speak and make their appeal. Keep your heart sensitive and alert to the holiest things.

THE GREATEST PRIZE-WINNER IN THE WORLD

“He that winneth souls is wise.”—Prov. 11: 30.

BRIEFLY, the English moral philosopher, declares that in all regions of thought—religious, scientific, artistic or literary—the question of questions, the pivot on which everything turns, is that of personality. What we mean by that, what importance we attach to it, colors our every idea on every subject. And yet, there is no other topic about which there seems to be so much confusion in the thinking world. It is not only that unlearned people have vague notions on the subject, but the scientific experts are often at hopeless loggerheads about it. The scientific materialist has always belittled personality. He claims, for one thing, to have cleared the universe of an enormous number of its presupposed inhabitants. The fauns, satyrs, sprites, fairies, guardian angels, and what-not which in the earlier pagan, and, in a different form, in later Christian times,

peopled earth and sky, have given place to the reign of natural law. More than that, this scientific materialism undertakes to de-personalize humanity itself. It dethrones the individual and puts the whole emphasis of value on the race. Man's immortality, it says, is only a racial immortality. The future life of the individual is simply the life he transmits to his children, and the ideas, the influence and the example he leaves behind him. As to his own separate self, the body and mind stuff of which he is composed is entirely disintegrated at death, to reappear in a thousand different forms of matter, force, and sensibility in the endless dance of the world. And it adds a finishing touch to this philosophy by denying that the First Cause of the universe can be in any sense considered as a Person.

Now without reference to the great revelation of the Bible which begins in its opening sentence with the assertion of the personality of God, and tells in its opening chapters of the birth of man's personality, we have in our own minds and hearts a consciousness that protests against all this dethronement of the individual. I took part once in a great

jubilee service in honor of the late Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage, in Brooklyn, where there were speakers representing every phase of human life. One of these was a Jewish Rabbi, who happened to be a Russian Jew. It had only been a little while before that Dr. Talmage had been saying some very eulogistic things of the Czar of Russia, and the great hit of the evening was the diplomatic way in which this Russian Jew managed to eulogize Dr. Talmage, and at the same time maintain his own integrity of thought. Speaking of what Dr. Talmage had said of the Russian government, he patted his own breast and said: "We feel that it is not true." So the materialist may say what he pleases about man's lack of personality, but we feel and know within ourselves that we are individual and personal, and that itself is proof of the great Personality who created us. If there is a certainty anywhere, it is our own consciousness. And consciousness finds within itself an intelligence, a sense of beauty, of righteousness and of love of which it argues there must have been a cause. The Cause or Creator of righteousness and love must possess them. But we can not imagine a pos-

essor of them as not being a person. And so consciousness, fairly interrogated, recognizes in the First Cause what we include in Personality, tho there may be infinitely more in it than that. Victor Hugo puts all this into one happy phrase, "The All would not be the All unless it contained a Personality. That personality is God."

Now I have made this long introduction because I think that to multitudes of people the idea of the soul is vague and unreal. Men talk about the soul as if it were a ghost, and of winning souls as if they were winning fancies. The soul is the personality. It is the whole man, the whole woman, the whole child, save only the house in which the man, the woman, or the child lives. That which thinks and fears, and hopes, that which dreams and decides, that which loves and hates, that which is me, that which is you, which makes you different from anybody else, which makes me myself, that is the soul. And when in the spirit of the wise man's utterance we talk about winning a soul, we do not talk about anything ghostly or unreal or vague or indefinite, but we talk about persuading and influencing a personality that has got a wrong

bent, that is being carried away with a vicious way of thinking or doing which is certain to bring about disaster, and charming, winning that personality away from the wrong path, and turning it into the safe path that leads toward high and holy thoughts, true and noble living, and finally to eternal triumph.

With this understanding, we can all appreciate that he who wins souls is wise from the standpoint of his desire to help and bless those whom he wins. If I help a man to win money, I do not know whether it is going to be a blessing to him or not. It may bring him happiness, but on the other hand it may bring him great sorrow. A great many people have been happier when they were poor than when they were rich. When I help a man to some high and lofty position of influence and power, I am not sure, and can not be sure, that I have really been a good friend to him. It may fail to add to his happiness or to his usefulness. Position and power not only carry great responsibilities, but they also carry with them great capacity for punishment. There are many, many people who lived happy and useful lives until they dreamed of power and position, who found

the beginning of sorrow and disaster upon its achievement.

And this is true of everything that pertains to the mere housing of the body, or to the outward circumstances of human life so far as it relates to possessions or to place and position. But if by the grace of God I am permitted to attain such an influence over the personality of any man or woman that it becomes possible for me to affect that inner personality, and turn the thoughts and affections of the soul away from things that are low or transient or unworthy, and turn them not only upon things that are true and holy, but toward objects that are eternal, then I know that I have blest the personality of that man or woman or child beyond all question. Beyond the possibility of a doubt I have made that life better and sweeter and happier, and through the blessing I have brought to that life I have helped to sweeten a home, or a community, and indeed have added to the sum of happiness and goodness in the world. So it becomes true that there is no sympathy, no love, so unselfish and pure as that which devotes itself with supreme consecration to the winning of souls to wisdom and to God.

It is also true that the truth of the Scripture we are studying is evident from the standpoint of the happiness of the one who wins souls. The Bible recognizes our right to consider the rewards of Christian service. The writer of the Book of Hebrews makes a very striking statement concerning Moses when he accounts for the refusal of the great lawgiver to accept a position as a courtier in Egypt, a place of high honor and wealth as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and his deliberate choice to suffer affliction with the poor and despised Hebrews, as being because he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses expected to get more happiness, more joy and peace, more splendid results, by enduring the present poverty of his people in Egypt and insuring his peace with God and his future joy and triumph. And Moses got his reward. What a splendid reward it was! No doubt, at the time, many a joke was made, and many a sneering comment went from lip to lip among the young nobles and hangers-on around the court of Pharaoh, concerning "that young fool Moses," who had thrown away such a brilliant career to cast his lot among a company

of slaves. But when Moses followed the pillar of fire through the Red Sea, and stood victorious on the other side, while those same young lordlings were washed up dead on the shore, the sneer had lost its point. Moses' life widened and enlarged from the very day he made that noble choice, and God rewarded him richly in this world, and he has been having his reward in heaven for thousands of years.

So it is all right to look on the reward side of Christian work. Even Christ followed on the path toward the cross "for the joy that was set before him." Let us look for a moment at the several kinds of happiness which come to those who devote themselves to winning souls to Christ.

First, there is the happiness of noble work. There is a joy in the exercise of one's gifts. There is a joy in simply exerting one's powers. This is true of mere animal life. The hunter or the fisherman will work hard all day long in pursuit of game from the mere joy that comes from action and from triumphing over difficulties. The soul-winner has that kind of joy in its highest form. He has the joy of using his noblest powers in the

pursuit of those whom, if he succeed in winning them, he will not hurt or destroy, but bless in the highest possible degree. The hunter must kill in order to have the sweets of victory, but the soul-winner has the higher joy of making alive. If those who are full of lethargy and negligence in Christian circles could experience for a little while the thrilling gladness of winning a soul from sin and bringing it as a trophy to the feet of Jesus, they would realize how tasteless is an idle life compared with the life of a soul-winner.

Another kind of joy comes from the sense of knowing that we are right. This is the joy that nerves the arm of the reformer who fights against odds and yet whose soul is filled with peace because he is sure he is doing his duty and is pleasing God. The men and the women who are giving their hearts up to winning other souls from paths of sin and turning them to righteousness never doubt that they are pleasing God. They know that He who loved lost sinners sufficiently to come down to earth, putting aside all the glory of heaven and giving Himself up to a life of poverty and suffering, finally dying the cruel death on the cross that

He might save them, will be pleased through and through when His disciples seek to win these ransomed souls from the mire of sin and bring them as jewels for His crown. That is a kind of a joy in which there can be no sting of bitterness or regret. Some joys are mingled with sorrow, but the joy that comes from knowing that you are pleasing God, that you are making happy the heart of Jesus by winning your fellow men to a better life, is a joy that has no shadow on it.

Another happiness comes to us from making other people happy. That, indeed, is one of the greatest sources of happiness in the world, and no one ever has it with sweeter fulness than the soul-winner. The deepest joy you can ever give to man or woman is to bring to their ears in such an attractive way that they will listen to it, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. It will not only make them happy, but it will make them springs of happiness that will go on starting up other sources of happiness in other hearts everywhere they go.

Happiness also comes from the gratitude and appreciation of those whom we have helped. One of the sweetest human thoughts

that the heart of man is capable of knowing is the consciousness that he is appreciated, that people are grateful because he has made their lives sweeter and richer. The soul-winner knows that joy. For if you win a man to Christ, you not only cause him to love Jesus, but forever after there must be a kindly place in his heart toward you, the cause of this sunburst of joy that has come to him.

The winner of souls has one of his greatest joys in the consciousness that he is sharing with Jesus Christ in the work which is dearest to the heart of his Lord. The man or the woman who is earnestly seeking to win another to love Jesus knows that he is never far from Christ, and that consciousness is the sweetest that the heart can know. I remember when one of my boys was only six years old he used to think there was no outing in the world quite so fine as when he could go with his father. One Saturday I told him in the morning that I was going to knock off that day, and go out with the children into the woods, away from the city, and stay all day. He danced all around the room, threw his arms around my neck and kissed me, and then, holding on with both hands at the back

of my neck, he leaned off as far as his arms would let him, and with beaming face, exclaimed: "What you say makes me feel very nice. It is always a nice day with father."

Instantly my heart leapt to the higher suggestion, and I thought of the promise of Jesus when He sent His disciples out to win souls, saying to them: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And I thought as I looked into my little boy's face that when a man really believes that and is conscious of that fellowship with Jesus in service, to use the little boy's expression, it "makes him feel very nice." I can not always be with my child, but Christ is able to carry out His promise and be consciously present forevermore.

Then there is the joy of feeling that we have treasures laid up that can be drawn upon for happiness in what otherwise might be lonely and sorrowful times. The soul-winner has that joy. Memory's storehouses

are filled with treasures, reminiscences that recall sweetest victories in winning tempted and tried and sinning men and women to know Christ as their Savior and friend. It has been my privilege to know a good many soul-winners after they were old and feeble, and were drawing near the end of their journey, and I know that such memories were a constant source of joy—a joy that neither sickness nor poverty nor old age could take away from them.

And these treasures will not lose their value in eternity. Our temporal treasures, such as money and fame, we must leave behind when we die, and go empty-handed, the pauper and the millionaire alike, into eternity. But the peculiar treasures of the soul-winner grow brighter in the sunshine of immortality, and we shall there know such joy as we can not now appreciate or understand, in the reward that God shall give us for winning souls.

THE LIAR

“The lip of truth shall be established forever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment.”—Prov. 12: 19.

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are His delight.”—Prov. 12: 22.

GOD loves genuine things, and abominates shams and deceits. All nature, which is the expression of God in earth and rock and trees and flowers, is proof of this. Everything in nature is genuine. There are no deceits, there are no shams. There are no frauds, no humbugs. The laws of the natural world, which is only another way of saying the laws of God, do not vary, and are not capricious. The law of gravitation is something that you can absolutely depend upon; you can stake your life upon it and find it true and reliable to the minutest degree every day in the week and everywhere on the earth. So it is with all God's laws. The mining engineer knows when he finds certain outcroppings at the top of the earth, that be-

neath are certain minerals. And nature never deceives by putting one kind of display outside and another kind inside. So it is through all the universe. Nature is frank, open, sincere, genuine, truthful.

And if we turn from this outer bible, a bible written on mountains and rivers and forests and plains and fields and oceans, to the other Bible written first in the hearts of inspired men and next on skins of wild beasts in caves and in palaces, treasured up and watched over through the centuries, always exalting and blessing every man and every nation to whom it has spoken its message, we find the same great utterance with regard to truth. The Bible is full of praise and admiration for the true, the genuine, and the sincere. And from start to finish the Bible has only abhorrence and denunciation for deceit and hypocrisy and falsehood.

It is suggested in our text, and it is what we know to be true, that falsehood disintegrates character. We have the same suggestion made by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, where in talking about the armor the Christian man should wear, he speaks of truth as a girdle. When a soldier in the old

time went into battle he tightened his girdle as tho to hold himself together, to gather all his force for the greatest exertion. So truth is a girdle that holds character together. If a man becomes untruthful, there is absolutely no confidence to be placed in him about anything. If you can not rely on him, if the nature is false, then the whole man will come tumbling down to destruction. Never under any circumstances trust a man who lies.

One of the most interesting men who has ever been in Washington public life was Wu Ting Fang, the Chinese ambassador. He was a great man to ask questions, and one day he asked a newspaper reporter what salary he received. The young fellow, wanting to make a big impression on the ambassador, answered glibly, "One hundred and fifty dollars a week." "It is too much; it is altogether too much," said the more candid than polite Chinaman. "You are not worth more than twenty-five dollars a week." Some time later the Chinese minister learned that the reporter had not spoken the truth, and that instead of a hundred and fifty dollars a week he received but sixty dollars. Consequently, when he again presented himself at the Chinese le-

gation for information for his paper, he was curtly dismissed by Wu Ting Fang with these words: "You lied to me about your salary. If you will lie to me about such a thing as that, you will lie about anything. I do not trust you. I have nothing to say to you. I want to revise my former estimate of your value. Instead of being worth twenty-five dollars a week, you are not worth anything, sir!" Wu Ting Fang believed in Paul's estimate that truth is a girdle that holds character together, and that falsehood disintegrates it and destroys it.

For a moment a lie often seems to be a very desirable refuge from a troublesome situation, but beware of a refuge that is, as our text says, "but for a moment." I have been reading recently the story of a New England clergyman who relates that when he was a young boy he got into the habit of telling falsehoods to his mother. And he tells how he was broken of the habit. He had prevailed on his mother, after much earnest entreaty, to buy for him half a dozen Shanghai hens—Kinsley (for that was the boy's name) giving as a reason for the purchase that the Shanghai was a vastly better layer than the ordi-

nary hen. After waiting a good while for some evidence of this greater fruitfulness, his mother said to him one day: "How about your big Shanghais, Kinsley? Instead of laying better, they don't seem to have laid at all." "Yes, they are laying, I tell you, mother. There is a nest now under the cow's crib with twenty-three eggs in it." "Well, Bridget, go and get Kinsley to show you where they are, and bring them in." The boy was greatly scared. He did not know that there was a nest there, much less that there were any eggs in it. However, as he was in for it, he went to the barn with Bridget, put his arm down into the hole in the corner of the cow's crib, felt and took out an egg and put it in the basket. Then he reached in and took out another until he took out in all just twenty-three eggs. Outwardly he was triumphant; he was saved; but inwardly he was scared nearly to death. The boy was not naturally a liar. He had naturally a wholesome nature, and he felt that Satan was encouraging him to cast in his lot with the Prince of Liars by helping him out in his mendacity, and he never told another lie.

Nothing lasts but the truth. Solomon says

the lip of truth shall be established forever, while falsehood is only temporary. And that is true not only of words and conversations, but of deeds. I remember some years ago, when the great Capitol building at Albany, New York, was about to tumble down before it was completed, after multiplied millions of dollars had been spent upon it, somebody compared it to the Parthenon, which was erected about four hundred years before the coming of Jesus, and was in a perfect state of preservation until 1687, when it was partially destroyed by the explosion of a shell. Built in the age of Pericles, four centuries before the Christian era, the amazing temple might have been seen in its glory by Shakespeare and Bacon; but for the explosion of that shell, it might have stood, the world's finest building on the world's finest site for thousands of years to come. The other building, the Albany Capitol, built only a few years ago, had on it before it was done such signs as "Danger." "No Admittance!" It was ready to fall down of its own inherent weakness and required enormous expenditure to prevent it from collapse. What was the difference between these two buildings? It

was simply this: the Greek temple on the Acropolis was builded truly, it was a genuine, honest piece of work, while the other building was built simply in an effort to steal money. There was no sincerity whatever in putting up the structure—no honesty. The builders wrought in the vile spirit of dishonest gain.

That is the difference between truth and lies—the Parthenon, standing for more than two thousand years, wearing throughout the centuries its smile of perfect loveliness; the Albany Capitol, falling down almost before it could be fairly occupied. All lies must sooner or later fall. Only the truth shall endure.

Only truth can give dignity to character. The man who is suspected of deceit and of lack of frankness and outspoken sincerity is always at a discount everywhere. I know that young men, and young women, too, are often put under cruel pressure in business in regard to the question of truth. But I say to you that it is a hundred times better to lose your position than to maintain it by insincerity and lies. The success of a falsehood, the wise man says, is "but for a moment," but the lip of truth shall be established.

A young man in a large dry goods store was asked by a customer for some goods which the firm had had on hand for a long time. The customer was pleased with the articles, but before he purchased them he asked the question: "Are the goods of the latest commercial value and style?" The young man at once knew they were not, but he hesitated a moment, thinking that if he told him that they were not the latest style he would certainly not buy them; and, if he told him they were, he would be telling a lie. His conscience conquered, and he said: "They are not of the latest style, but are of the very best quality." The man purchased more than he intended and said to a friend afterward that the firm had gained him as a regular customer through the truthfulness and honesty of that clerk. The young man refused to receive what might have come to him in a way God would disapprove. He gained more by being true, and God will never let us, in the long run, lose anything by genuineness and truth.

Do not let me fail to impress it upon your mind and heart that truth is the very greatest insignia of rank and nobility in human char-

acter. A man who is untruthful is common and low and vulgar, no matter what his position in the world, no matter how much money he has, no matter what kind of a house he lives in—he is cheap, and useless, and unworthy of anybody's respect. But the man who is genuine, who is sincere, who is like a clear fountain from which you can take up a bucket of water at any time and look through its limpid depths as in a mirror, that man is a nobleman, he belongs to the royal family of manhood. No matter if he be poor in this world's goods, he is rich in the higher and nobler gold.

When the present King of England, then known as Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, visited this Western country as a young man, he was entertained on a big cattle ranch. A fishing excursion was arranged for one day, and a gruff old rancher promised that his nephew would provide bait for "the Englishman," of whose rank he was ignorant. The man who was entertaining the Prince sent for the rancher the previous evening, and anxiously inquired: "Has your nephew brought the bait?" "No." "We want it by daylight." "You'll hev' it," calmly replied

the old man. "This is a matter of great importance. Are you sure that we shall have it?" "Didn't Jabez give you his word?" "But how do I know that he will keep it?" said the uneasy host. "How do ye know?" said the rancher, sternly. "Because he is a Pratt. None of the Pratts ever was known to tell a lie, and I reckon Jabez isn't a-goin' to break the record." And he tramped off, in great indignation.

"You must pardon the old man, Your Grace," said the host, turning to the Duke of Newcastle, who was standing near by. "He does not know who you are."

"Pardon him? I call that very fine! Why should not the Pratts be proud of their honest blood, as well as the Pelham-Clintons?" The daylight brought Jabez and the bait.

In one of the noble houses in England a delicate glass vase, called "The Luck of Edenhall," has been preserved with great care for centuries in consequence of a legend that when it is broken the family to which it belongs will perish also from among men. If every American family cherished, like the Pratts, a faith in the truth and honor of their ancestors with a resolve, like Jabez, "never

to break the record," there would be a tremendous uplifting of our social life.

Since lying lips are an abomination unto God, we know that anything that is false is doomed from its birth. It may be hidden for a long time, but falsehood will finally come to light.

Two thousand years before Christ, some Egyptian priests were paid large sums to embalm the body of a royal princess. When the royal body was delivered to them for embalment, they were under the influence of strong drink, and neglected it. When they sobered up, it was too late to embalm it. To cover up their neglect and sin, they put into the splendid mummy-case the body of a common Egyptian woman, dipt in asphaltum. They laughed over it, saying, "It will make no difference a thousand years from to-day, as it will never be known." It was not known for a long time; but it became known a few years ago. That mummy-case was purchased by explorers and found its way to America. To create a popular interest in Egyptian exploration, it was agreed to open the case and unwrap the mummy on some public platform. Forty centuries had passed, but on the day

set, that mummy-case was opened by Professor Agassiz of Harvard College, in Tremont Temple, Boston, before an audience of three thousand persons. When the case was opened the cheat was detected, exposed, and explained by the great scientist. That vast audience, to a man, hissed the Egyptian priests and denounced their falsehood, and the world has taken up that hiss to repeat it as the ages come and go.

My friends, let this signal illustration that no falsehood is finally hid warn you of the certainty that only truth shall permanently endure. God is bound at some time to uncover every false thing. In the Day of Judgment the universe will see if you have been false to your opportunity and to your duty. But if we live, by God's grace, genuine lives, with sincere hearts, truth will be our decoration and our adornment in the presence of the throne of God.

Gluck, a great musical composer of his day, was once honored at the performance of one of his operas by an invitation of Queen Marie Antoinette to come to her box to receive her congratulations. Half dazed with emotion, excitement and fatigue, the old musician,

rising from his obeisance, clapped his hands to his eyes, crying with horror, "Blood! Blood round the Queen's neck!" "It is only this," said Marie Antoinette, hastily snatching off her necklace of rubies, and the musician, looking again, saw the fair white throat, rising unharmed and stainless. But, my friends, there is a necklace fairer than any rubies, and one that brings no envy or jealousy with it. The gems are mercy and truth, and they make, says Solomon, who was a great judge of jewels, a supreme ornament of grace for the neck.

THE CHOICE OF COMPANIONS

“Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise; but the companion of fools shall smart for it.”—Prov. 13: 20.

S^{AADI}, the Persian moralist, says: “A friend of mine put into my hands a piece of scented clay; I took it, and said to it, ‘Art thou musk or ambergris, for I am charmed with thy perfume?’ It answered, ‘I was a despicable piece of clay, but I was for some time in the company of the rose; the sweet quality of my companion was communicated to me, otherwise I would only be a bit of clay, as I appear to be.’” We have in the Persian’s story simply an illustration of Solomon’s assurance that the man who walks with wise men will himself become wise. We can not help being influenced by our surroundings. This is one of the reasons why it is so important that children should have pure and happy surroundings in their infancy and early youth. A man may get old and wrinkled, but away down in his heart there are

memories of boyhood and youth and the opening years of home fellowship which, when recalled, mellow his nature and arouse his best self. Eugene Field strikes deep into the heart of many a stern-faced, gray-headed man, when he sings :

There is no love like the good old love—
The love that mother gave us!
We are old, old men, yet we pine again
For that precious grace—God save us!
So we dream and dream of the good old times,
And our hearts grow tenderer, fonder,
As those dear 'old dreams bring soothing gleams
Of heaven away off yonder.

But important as the early home associations are, our associations become still more important when we go forth into life and are beginning to get our trend or current of existence, when we are being shaped and fashioned for the real man or woman we are to become. Then it is that it is impossible for us to be independent of or indifferent to our companionship.

Dr. Parkhurst declares that success is not merely what a man is, but also what he is connected with. A famous woman was having recommended to her a traveling compan-

ion. She broke in on the words of commendation by saying, "Her looks, parentage, or education mean very little. Tell me who her associates are, and I can decide whether I want her."

Assayers tell us that tin, poor in itself, when joined to copper to make bronze, develops qualities more desirable than those of copper itself. It has a dormant value which comes out in a partnership. Lafcadio Hearn once saw a little Japanese girl teaching a baby brother the character for man. It was easily done by balancing two curved sticks against each other. "See," she said, "each stands only by the help of the other. One by itself can not stand. Without help one person can not live in this world; but by getting and giving help, everybody can live." And so it is true that our associations, our comrades, will have influence upon us. If we associate with wise, good people and walk along the way of life with them with the kind of conversations and books and conduct which appeals to them, we become like them. We see things from their attitude. We get their point of view on life. We get their vision of God and humanity.

Our theme suggests to us that while it is true that wisdom and goodness are contagious, it is also true that folly is contagious. Solomon declares that a man who associates with foolish people will smart for it. There are many kinds of foolish people, but there are some people so eminently foolish that it is a matter of life and death importance for us to be on our guard against becoming their companions.

For instance, there is the skeptical, cynical person who is forever saying sharp things about God, and the Bible, and religion, and casting suspicion on the existence of goodness and virtue in men and women. Such a person you must shun as you would the plague, as an associate. You can take a live coal in your hand and not be burned as easily as you can associate with a skeptical, cynical man or woman that uses the Bible to point shafts of wit, and sneers at prayer, and has contempt for the Church, without losing in your own faith and in the wholesomeness of your own character. No one will ever hurt you so much as the people who destroy the simple faith in God, and in prayer, and in goodness, which you acquired in the pure

home where you were born. No burglar, no thief can do so badly toward you, or steal from you anything so precious, as the companion who robs you of that sweet, fresh faith of your father and mother in the Bible, and in the God of the Bible.

Another class of foolish people that no one can ever associate with without smarting for it are those who are forever seeking to see all manner of things and to enter into all sorts of reckless experiments on the ground that one must "see life." There is no greater folly than that, and multitudes of young people are led to destruction every year because of that kind of association. Henry Ward Beecher once said: "If there are any that have made up their mind 'to know life,' I say to them, Stop!" You may pay too dear for your knowledge. Men have looked into the crater of a volcano to see what was there, and gone down to explore, without coming back to report progress. Many and many a man has gone to see what was in hell, that did see it. Many a man has looked to see what was in the wine cup, and found a viper coiled therein. Many a man has gone into the house of lust, and found that the ends thereof were

death—bitter, rotten death! Many a man has sought to learn something of the evils of gambling, and learned it to his own ruin. And I say to every man, the more you know about these things, the more you ought to be ashamed of knowing; a knowledge of them is not necessary to education or manhood; and they ought to be avoided, because when a man has once fallen into them, the way out is so steep and hard. Many a man has begun to climb the giddy cliff of reformation; but there are multitudes who have not succeeded in getting over its brow.

Another class of fools close akin to these, that no one ever gets into the habit of associating with without smarting for it, are the people who presume on their power to walk up to the edge of a precipice and not go over—the people who like to show how close they can come to sin and yet not be destroyed by it. A young woman in Baltimore a while ago gave a novel performance at the zoo in that city. She went into a lion cage, where the lion mother nestled with her four cubs. She picked them up one by one and brought them out. The lioness, following her, carried the last one just as a cat carries a kitten. The

performer petted and fondled the little lion cubs and caressed the old lioness. Some day, perhaps, she will be destroyed by them. I remember, some years ago, near where I was living in Brooklyn, in a park, a young woman was in the habit of kissing a lion at a public performance. She had often done so without injury, but one day the lion seized her and tore her face to pieces with his cruel teeth. My friend, beware of associating with people who are fondling lion cubs, and are caressing what they imagine to be the tamed lions of sin. It is never safe, tho sin come in the form of a lion ever so tame. The danger and the devil of it are still there, and some day it will destroy the man or the woman who tampers with it.

If you have been drawn into such associations until there are certain evil things that tempt you and fascinate you, I beg of you to escape for your life. Some one says: The cat that has caught the mouse plays with it before she devours it. And the most infernal habits paw their victims at times, and give them space to run in before completing their destruction. I have seen nimble mice that were wiser than their tyrant cat, and that,

taking advantage of their little space, shot into some crevice and escaped. So I beg of you who have your moments when temptation plays with you and lets you go free, escape to Christ your Savior!

There is another class of foolish people against whom we need to be on our guard, that are not nearly so likely to frighten us as those whom I have mentioned. They are the idlers, the people who have no definite purpose in life, the people who live just to be entertained and who drift along without any rudder to whatever port happens to open. There are no greater fools than those, and they are oftentimes exceedingly dangerous companions. Edward Everett Hale, whose father was a printer and publisher and whose boys were all brought up to work and with definite purposes for their lives, tells how when he was a young boy a boy neighbor said to him one day: "Come, let us go down to the wharves." And Edward Everett replied, "What to do?" The other boy answered, "Oh nothing. Just to fool around." Dr. Hale says he has never forgotten the shock of amazement that went through him at the idea of going anywhere without a purpose. He

had been brought up with the conviction as sure as life with him that he was to have something worthy to do and do it with all his soul.

On one of his trips north, Peary, the explorer, left his ship, and with dogs and sleds started over the ice-field. The men were fresh, the dogs were strong, the ice was good, his hopes ran high. On they went, day after day. Then, with instruments, he took an observation, and to his surprize found that they were as far south as when they left the ship. The stars can not be wrong. There was but one conclusion. The ice had drifted south as fast as they had traveled north. He got off that ice-field as soon as he could.

But explorers in the world of morals do not seem to learn so readily. They start out to be good and true, and if they stop to take an observation of themselves by comparing themselves with Christ, they see that they have lost ground. But they keep on. How long will it be before they reach the goal? What is often needed is to change the associations, to change the companionships. Get off the floating ice-field on to the solid ground!

One of the greatest curiosities noted by

travelers in Alaska is the wonderful haven of driftwood on the coast between Yakatag and Kyak Islands, some twelve hundred miles or more northeast of Seattle. The constant deposit of logs and driftwood in this particular spot, which has been going on for thousands of years, is due to the phenomena of the tides, the Pacific gulf stream, the mysterious ocean currents, and the peculiar formation of the shore lines at that point. Logs and timbers are readily identified there as having come from Japan, China, India, and other parts of Asia, as well as from California, Washington, and other portions of the American continent. There are fine logs of the camphor tree, the mahogany, the redwood, and the pine, and countless other varieties in this driftage. Some of these contain the names of the men who felled the trees and the sawmills for which they were destined but never reached. One beach after another has been formed by the floating timbers, and a little distance back from the shore the deposits are so old that the wood in some places is petrified, while a little deeper in the earth it has turned into coal. There is something almost pathetic about those rare and rich timbers

that have drifted on the currents thousands of miles from the track of commerce and usefulness, to be finally tossed up on the sandbar and beached forever. But there is a wreckage-beach sadder than that. It is the beach on which young men and young women are flung who, having been brought up in pure homes, taught to pray at a mother's knee, consecrated to God by a thousand gracious and holy influences, have gone out from the home harbor and have been caught in the currents of folly, drawn into association with idle and purposeless lives, until after drifting hither and thither they are beached at last on an alien shore. Beware of becoming driftwood on the ocean of life.

I thank God I need not stop without telling you of the Christ who comes throwing a life-line of hope to the soul that is adrift. He says of himself, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." It is Christ who tells the story of the young man who went away from his father's house and wasted his substance with evil companions, but who, when he came to himself, came back with repentance and received the father's kiss of love and welcome.

Some of you have read Ralph Gordon's remarkable "Black Rock." In it there is a story of a scene in the stable at a lumber camp, where some rough men, having become interested in "The Story of the Prodigal Son," were working it out in their own way: One night Graeme noticed a light in the stable. He heard the voice of one reading. In a vacant stall, on straw, a number of men were grouped. Sandy was reading. Nelson was kneeling in front of him and gazing into the gloom beyond; Baptiste lay upon his stomach, his chin in his hands, and his upturned eyes fastened upon Sandy's face; Lachlan Campbell sat with his hands clasped about his knees, and two other men sat near him. Sandy was reading the undying story of the prodigal, Nelson now and then stopping him to make a remark. "Dat young feller," said Baptiste, "wha's hees nem, heh?" "He has no name. It is just a parable," explained Sandy. "He's got no nem? Hes' just a parom'ble? Das mean nothing?" Nelson explained, "Dat young feller, hees name Baptiste, heh? And de old Fadder, he's le bon Dieu?" "Bon, das good story for me. How you go back? You go to the pries'?"

Nelson said the book mentioned no priest. "You go back in yourself, see?" "Non; das so, sure nuff. Ah"—as if a light broke in upon him—"you go in your own self! You make one leetle prayer. You say: 'Le bon Fadder, oh I want come back! I so tire, so hungree, so sor-ree!' He say: 'Come right 'long.' Ah, dass fuss-rate! Nelson, you make one leetle prayer for Sandy and me." And Nelson lifted up his face and said, "F'ather, we're all gone far away; we have spent all, we are poor, we are tired of it all; we want to come back. Jesus came to save us, and He said if we came He wouldn't cast us out, no matter how bad we were. Oh, Jesus Christ, we are a poor lot and I'm the worst of the lot, and we're trying to find the way. Show us how to get back. Amen." And they found the way.

THE PERIL OF MAKING LIGHT OF SIN

“The foolish make a mock of guilt.”—Am. Rev. Prov. 14: 9.

IN the Book of Lamentations there is a picture of sin and sinners in which there is this striking figure: “Their visage is blacker than a coal.” And it is true that sin blackens life in every possible way. Have you ever seen a stoker come up from the furnace-room on a great steamer, or seen a coal-miner, or a company of them, come up out of the mines from their work, with every inch of face, and neck, and arms, and hands as black as if they had been painted the shade of night? Sin does that, at last, to the mind and heart of people who yield themselves to it.

Sin blackens the thought and the imagination. There is where it begins its soiling process. People are always sinning in their thoughts before they yield to outward transgression. Sometimes this goes on for many years, unsuspected by any one else and not

truly appreciated by the sinner himself. Little by little, the thought and imagination is given up to evil meditations and impure suggestions. Outwardly the life is white, but inwardly the secret imaginations and meditations of the soul grow ever blacker and more like the prince of darkness who paints them. In the end that inner coloring will show in conversation and conduct. Every once in a while, a man or a woman who has lived an upright and true life before all the world, and whose name has been above reproach, suddenly gives way to some evil deed, and across the white record of an honorable career there is the great smut mark of a black, sinful action, and everybody is astonished. But God, who sees down in the hearts of men, is not surprized, for He sees that it is only the inner coloring showing through. The black thoughts and the black imaginations always precede the black deed.

Not only is the sinner's inner visage like a black coal, but sin is constantly bringing men and women, who yield to it, to a dark end. Some years ago a man of high position and large property visited New York City, and spent the evening in a barroom in his hotel.

He fell in with bad people, who, discovering that he had a large amount of money with him, lured him away and murdered him that night, carving his body to pieces with a butcher's cleaver, and hiding it away in a cellar. Here was an honorable man, as the world knows men, a man of many good qualities, a man of high family, and good social and business connections. If he permitted himself to think about death, he no doubt expected to die with his friends around him; to be soothed in his last hours by the gentle words and the kind hands of those who loved him. He expected to be followed to his grave by a host of men and women with whom he had been associated in the work of life. But he tampered with sin. He had a black, rotten spot of self-indulgence in him. He toyed with the wine glass, and so, unexpectedly, like a flash of lightning out of a clear sky, like the black thunder-cloud that fills the land with darkness at midday, when the morning has been bright and full of sunshine, his woful and gruesome death swooped down upon him, and closed his career in shame and disgrace.

Let no man think lightly of sin. Sin is a

terrible thing. To yield to sin is to run the risk of losing everything you cherish and hold dear. The least sin will brush the bloom from your character, and rob your manhood or your womanhood of its truest grandeur. Sin unrepented of must make as impassable a gulf between your soul and God as there was between Dives and Lazarus. Nobody ever made so much of sin as did Jesus Christ. He who spoke the tenderest words of love that were ever spoken, spoke also the most terrible words about sin. Be sure of it, that to give way to sin is to become the man or the woman with a black visage, a badge of outlawry against God.

People who make a mock of sin either do not understand or are indifferent to the dangerous fascination which it may come to have over them. A singular accident occurred a while ago in California. Two men went out to inspect an outcropping of coal in a mountain cañon. They had been working for some time, at some distance apart, when one of them noticed a break in the ledge of earth overhanging the place where they stood. He knew that in a few moments an avalanche of soil would fall, and shouted to his comrade

to run for his life. Supposing his warning would be heeded, he jumped to a place of safety, but on looking back he saw, to his horror, that the man had not moved, but stood gazing intently at something on the side of the hill. Presently, as he had foreseen, the ledge fell, burying his friend under it. He worked with might and main to dig him out, eventually succeeding; but found him unconscious from pain and suffocation. Medical assistance was procured, and the man came to himself, but was seriously injured. He explained his failure to move when he heard his comrade's warning, by the fact that a large rattlesnake had thrust its head out from a crevice in the rock immediately in front of him, and the gaze of the reptile had hypnotized him, so that he could not move. He knew his danger, but was like one paralyzed under the spell of the snake's eyes. It seems marvelous that the snake should have such power as to hold a man inert in the presence of such imminent peril, but it is still more astonishing that sinful fascination should hold so many men and women helpless when their immortal souls are in danger, and prevent them from making their escape.

People who mock at sin fail to take into consideration the terrible power of habit which so often becomes irresistible and unbreakable in a human life.

A gentleman standing by Niagara once saw an eagle which was standing upon a frozen lamb encased in a floating piece of ice. The eagle stood upon that dead carcass and feasted upon it as it was drifting on toward the rapids. Every now and again the eagle would proudly lift his head into the air to look around him, as much as to say, "I am drifting on toward danger, but I know what I am doing; I will fly away and make good my escape before it is too late." With great interest the watcher looked on as that piece of floating ice with its strange cargo neared the awful crash and roar of the mighty falls. At last he saw the eagle stoop and spread his powerful wings and leap for his flight; but, alas! alas! while he had been feasting on that dead carcass his feet had frozen to its fleece. He leaped and shrieked and beat upon the ice with his wings, but it was all in vain. The ice-frozen lamb and the eagle went over the falls and down into the foam and darkness of death below.

This is the picture of every soul that is playing with and feasting upon sin. Many a young man intends, after a little more indulgence, to turn from his sins and be saved; but, alas! when he would turn he finds himself bound by sinful habits, his affections poisoned by sin, his will paralyzed, his soul frozen to the decaying mass of evil things upon which he has been feasting. My friends, there is no greater folly than making light of sin as tho it were a small thing.

The folly of making light of sin and mocking at it becomes more apparent when we consider the fact that sin indulged in gradually changes the character of a man or a woman so that the personality itself becomes different.

The Spaniards have a legend called "The Petrified Man." This legend relates that a laborer named Mateo, who was working in a vineyard, was accused of eating the grapes he ought to have gathered. He not only denied the charge, but with a terrible oath called down the judgment of Heaven upon his head if he were false. According to the legend, no sooner had he uttered the oath than his face became full of horror, and he

exclaimed, "What is the matter with me? I can not move." Here he looked down at his feet, and uttered a shriek when he saw that they were turned to stone. Then he cried out in his agony, confest his sin, and begged the bystanders to help him. They all did what they could, and tried to pull him from the ground; but it was of no use. They rubbed him with vinegar and oil to take the stiffness out, but nothing availed. The stone seemed to creep farther along his body. Then the spectators fell on their knees to plead for the man who was turning into stone; but in vain, for, when they turned toward the object of their prayers, he was beyond the reach of human aid. He was turned to stone, just as he stood, his basket on his arm, and his eyes staring into vacancy. In the corner of an old garden travelers are to this day shown with great awe, "The Man of Stone."

Of course, this is a most improbable legend; indeed, impossible; but it illustrates a fact about which there can be no doubt. There is a process of petrification going on in the hearts of sinful men and women. They lose tenderness and softness and gentleness of soul, and often become past feeling. The stone

creeps into their conscience, and it loses its sensitiveness to good and to evil; it creeps into their hearts, and they grow insensible to God's love; it creeps into their will, and they can not follow what they know to be good; it creeps into their eyes, and they become stone-blind to heavenly things; into their hands, and they can not serve God; into their feet, and they do not stir in the path of duty. I am sure that some of you recognize some of these symptoms in your own life, even as I speak, and you know you are not so sensitive to good things as you were ten years ago, that your heart is not so sympathetic as it was a year ago. Do not make light of these things, but in God's name be warned by them.

The folly of making light of sin becomes clear to us when we consider that whenever we yield to sin, when we choose to do wrong instead of right, when we break God's law and accept the devil's lie as a counsel for our conduct instead of the divine guidance, we mortgage ourselves to the devil, and if things take their natural course, and nothing interferes to take us out of that clutch, it will go on to foreclosure and ruin in this world and in eternity. If there is one here who has

mortgaged himself to Satan, and is living in sin, and who will go to bed with a guilty conscience, I want to press it home upon your soul that the devil is your creditor; it is through your sin he holds a mortgage on you, and he is not going to throw up that mortgage. He has promised you a great deal of happiness and pleasure at a very light expense, but every month he will raise the interest on you. There never was such a usurer as he. Some pawnbrokers have been terribly bloodthirsty, but there never was one yet that could grind out such agony as the devil who holds souls in pawn. Oh, man! Oh, woman! Do not, I beg you, count it a small thing that the evil one has a mortgage on your soul through a wicked habit, an evil passion, or a sin of any kind, I care not how carefully it may be hidden! Some day he will foreclose that mortgage, and bring your soul into court, in the blazing light of the great white throne of judgment.

If we are wise we must look upon our sin and see how it will seem in the light of eternity. A distinguished professor of literature was once a visitor to Walt Whitman, the poet, at the same time when Robert G. Inger-

soll, the famous agnostic, was also a guest. During the evening Ingersoll gave to his associates a brilliant analysis of the philosophy of Shakespeare, and then began a long monolog on the subject of Christianity, in which he treated it with his usual keen sarcasm. During Ingersoll's talk Walt Whitman sat silent in his chair with a very sober countenance. He was at this time far along in years, and his long, white hair and snowy beard, with the loose and picturesque clothing which he wore, gave him a strikingly venerable appearance. When the distinguished agnostic had concluded, Whitman raised his head and slowly answered: "Yes, Bob, that all sounds very well; but when a man gets as near the end as I am, he begins to have a different idea about those things." Ingersoll said no more, but looked thoughtful.

I must not close without a word of hope to those who are already in the clutches of sin. It was because Satan had a sinning world in such a state of helplessness that Jesus Christ came from heaven to be our Savior. Here is where the infinite tenderness of Christ comes in, when Jesus comes offering to take our sins upon Himself. He

will bear them in His own body. He will be smitten for us. If I owe a man a mortgage, nothing can save me from it, if I am not able to pay it myself, but that some friend shall come and pay it all, principal and interest, and have it canceled. That is our case. We have sinned against God; we have broken the divine laws; the devil has a mortgage on us; evil habits hold us like chains; guilt fastens on the conscience like a disease; the will power becomes paralyzed, so that when we would do good, evil is present with us. It is in such a case that Jesus Christ comes saying to us, "I will take your place; I have paid your debt in crimson drops of my own blood; I have redeemed you. I will break the bondage of this wicked habit; I will cleanse your soul of this foul disease; I will send you forth a free man, a free woman, to the love of good things, and the joyous doing of your duty to God and your fellows." This is God's remedy for sin, and this is the only remedy that has ever yet given peace to a guilty soul.

MORAL COLOR-BLINDNESS

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”—Prov. 14 : 12.

ONE of the interesting and severe tests which a candidate for a naval career has to meet on his entrance to the Naval Academy at Annapolis is his power to detect colors. On a table there is a tumbled-up and confused mass of worsteds—probably waste from a worsted mill, odds and ends of every conceivable color and shade. At one side there are several full skeins of yarn, one for each of the principal colors—red, blue, green, yellow, and so on. The examining doctor picks up one of the latter—we’ll say, for instance, the red one—and asks, “What color is that?” You say, “Red.” Then he points to the big pile and tells you to pick out such pieces as appear to you to be of the same color as the large skein. You go ahead and select the reds of various shades. “All right,” interrupts the doctor. “Now, what

is this?" at the same time handing you another skein. "Green," you answer. "Well, pick some out of the pile like it." You place at one side several of the small pieces which look green to you, and the doctor, pointing to your selections, says: "Now, do all of these seem to you to be the same color?" You answer in the affirmative, and your next experience is to get an envelop containing a small slip of paper, with instructions to report at the commandant's office. There the envelop is opened, and you are told that you have been rejected because you are partially color-blind. It is, of course, very important that an officer of the navy should not be color-blind. A defective eyesight like that might cause him the loss of his ship through a failure to read signals correctly.

This fault of color-blindness is often shown in the commonest every-day experience. "Color-blindness is more common than folks suppose," said a car-starter. And he continued: "We fellows have a first-rate chance to find it out. It's a common thing for me to tell a man to take a green car and then see him stand stock-still and let it go by. He will swear it was blue. The same thing

happens with yellow cars, which look pink to lots of people. A good many of them don't know that there is anything wrong with their sight, and think that the trouble is with the other fellow. Why, I had a man advise me, not long ago, to see a physician because I told him to get on a yellow car, which he thought was pink. He warned me, in confidence, that I would be discharged if the company found out my condition. It's no use arguing in a case like that, so I thanked him and told him that I would."

This matter of color-blindness is of special interest in the handling of railroad trains. It has been found by means of careful experiments that from two persons to two hundred in every one thousand are unable to distinguish clearly one color from another; some persons being so totally blind to color that they can see no difference between a strawberry and its leaf, except in form; others being confused over the varying shades of colors which they recognize as not identical.

When we consider that the danger signal on railroad tracks, at night, is a red light, it is of the most eminent importance that an

engineer or a switchman should be able to distinguish red from white or green, for a mistake at this point would often mean the destruction of a train-load of passengers. And the perils from color-blindness are largely increased by the fact that those who are afflicted with it are likely to count their sight as good as anybody's, unless they are confronted with positive evidence through some plain and practical test.

Hence, it has become the custom of the great railroad companies to test the vision of their employees, at the hands of skilled oculists, finding in some cases from ten to twenty-five per cent. of those who apply for positions as engineers and signal-men are at fault in color-judging.

Now, I have given you this long introduction with these repeated illustrations, that I might bring out clearly to your minds and hearts our theme in the higher realm of moral vision. There is a moral color-blindness which is far more serious in its results. Annoying as physical color-blindness is, and dangerous as it may oftentimes become, it is not of so much importance as moral color-blindness. Many people are morally color-

blind through their prejudices. They take the wrong path and think they are right. Isaiah said of such people: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" It is that which Solomon is speaking about in our text when he declares that there is a way that may seem right to the man that is walking in it, but danger lurks by the path and death waits at the end. It is that which Jesus Christ was speaking of when He said: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" But you ask, "How can we know the difference between right and wrong? Has not God given to each one of us in our consciences a sure test of moral light and moral darkness?" Most assuredly He has not. Conscience is a creature of education. It is not a safe guide left to itself; because it may have been educated wrongly. You say, "If a man does as well as he knows how, will he not be all right?" That depends altogether on how well he knows. Right is as certain as the poles. If a man's conscience is ignorant or has been taught that wrong is

right, then he will do wrong and not right when he follows his conscience. If a man is morally color-blind he is likely to be wrong conscientiously. Some of the most cruel and terrible things that have ever been done in this world have been done by conscientious people with the truest of motives.

Conscience tells us that we ought to do right, but conscience does not tell us what right is. "Conscience lays down no law for us to observe, but it reminds us faithfully to observe the law as it has been laid down before us."

Do you ask me, then, "How can I know what is right and what is wrong?" I will tell you. God has given us His word to reveal to us the right, to put up danger signals where paths diverge to evil ways. He has given His son Jesus Christ to show us a righteous life, and calls upon us to educate our consciences in the light of the Bible and in the light of the life and words of Jesus Christ.

I have been told that Scotch ship-builders on the Clyde are accustomed to send their newly launched vessels fifty miles down into the open sea, in order to test their compasses

away from the diverting attractions of the iron-stocked yards near their building. And, in crossing the Atlantic, the great steamships have to calculate each day, and make allowances for the "magnetic variations" of the compasses by which they steer. So it is of the greatest importance that we be on our guard against having our consciences deceived by the evil customs which surround us among the people where we toil and in the social circle where we live.

Dr. H. Clay Trumbull says that even if men are not explicitly taught that wrong is right, they are likely to infer that error is truth from the prevailing practises about them. The conscience of even the well-instructed man is, at the best, like a ship's compass; not like the polar star, at which the compass is supposed to point. The compass is safe to steer by as long as its needle points where it ought to point; but the compass needle may be forcibly deflected from the pole, or be drawn aside by outside attractions, and so become untrustworthy. And so it becomes true that if we will be sure that our consciences are true, we must test them out away from the influences of gold, or

pleasure, or appetite, or ambition, in the clear light of God's Word, and in the presence of the sinless life of Jesus Christ.

The captain of a great steamship carries with him not only a compass, but a chronometer, by which he determines the vessel's longitude. The chronometer is not itself the true standard of time; but it is conformed as nearly as possible to that standard, and then its rate of gain or true loss is carefully noted, in order that true time may be learned from it. A wise shipmaster is exceedingly watchful of that piece of delicate mechanism, on which depend his knowledge of his bearings and the safety of his voyage. Before each voyage it must be newly tested by the sun in the heavens; and at all times it must be delicately handled, and carefully shielded from rude jarring, lest its fine adjustment be destroyed.

My friends, this is a striking illustration of the care which ought to be taken of our consciences. If they are to be true guides, we must test them daily by the Sun of Righteousness, and guard and watch them lest by any rude and careless association with evil companions the accuracy of the conscience

be lost and we be left on the mid-ocean of life without a true guide.

This constant testing of ourselves becomes necessary also from the fact that it is not always possible to tell far in advance whether a thing will be right or wrong for us, whether the path we are traveling will be safe, or suddenly become unsafe. Many things do not disclose themselves at once. Many things that seem entirely harmless to us at first, and are harmless, after a while become dangerous and destructive. I remember a boy neighbor in my youth, whose big brother brought home from the hunt in the mountains a little bear cub. He was a dainty little fellow, and his fur was as soft to the touch as a kitten's. He was as harmless, and, after a little, as playful and affectionate, as a little puppy. The boy and myself often played with him as he grew larger, and we thought him the safest and most fascinating of playmates. He grew to be quite a large animal in a few months, and appeared to be entirely cured of his wild nature. But one day something stirred the old instincts of the bear in him. Some inherited ferocity awoke and he seized his little master and cruelly tore and lacer-

ated him, and the boy but barely escaped with his life, fearfully wounded. What had once seemed to be a harmless companion became suddenly a terrible enemy. The path that had seemed right and safe to the boy came near having death at the end of it. And so it is that we need to be on the alert and watchful concerning the associations in which we live, and the conduct which we permit ourselves, that that which has been harmless and even helpful does not change into evil and become dangerous to our better natures.

We must be very careful not to take counsel of our pride or of a sense of self-sufficiency. Sometimes people think that they are an exception to the general rules of cause and effect. While other men have always found that "the wages of sin is death," yet somehow or other they expect to go dangerous ways, where others have been ambushed and unexpectedly destroyed, and yet miss the death at the end. There could be no greater folly than this. Samson thought that way. He was so strong, and God interfered to save him so many times, that he thought no real disaster could ever overtake him,

but the night came when he was shorn of his power, and his enemies put out his eyes, and he toiled in the mill, a miserable slave. The way seemed all right to Samson, but the end was blindness and slavery and death.

Carlyle tells the story of one of the old German emperors who, when corrected for a mistake he made in Latin, replied, "I am king of the Romans, and above grammar!" Napoleon Bonaparte seemed to think that he was above all the laws by which lesser mortals must be governed. He arrogantly thought himself above and free from the ordinary standards of morality, and really seems to have believed that he had a perfect right to commit any crime, political or personal, that would advance his own interests; and, in truth, he did commit so many crimes it is almost impossible to recount them. This arrogant defiance of humanity and God seemed right to Napoleon, but the end meant the alliance of the world against him. It meant that he had been fighting against God, and the end of that way is always death.

My dear friends, I hang up this signal-lantern for you. Nothing is safe that is not right. To find what is right you must look

into God's Word, you must look into the face of Jesus Christ. He will never deceive you. But it is never safe to do anything that is contrary to and repulsive to Christ. It is never safe to do anything which you feel would make Jesus Christ blush with shame if it were done in His presence.

And in calling you to this kind of life I am not setting before you a hard way. No, indeed! It is the way of the transgressor that is hard. The path of the sinner is full of thorns. The pitfalls and the snares and the quicksands are all in the path of evil doing. The path of the man or the woman who follows Christ with an honest heart is the open path, it is the path that is well lighted, it is the path where no lion of deceit ever passes. The path of honest goodness, lighted up by the Sun of Righteousness, is not only the safe path, but it is the path along which men may go singing songs of gladness and courage. It is the one path that gets brighter and brighter as the light of eternity falls upon it. It is the path and the only path of human life that ends in peace.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BACK- SLIDER

“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.”—Prov. 14: 14.

THE backslider is a man or a woman who has once been lighted with the fire from heaven, and the fire has burned low and the light become dim. Paul makes this striking appeal to the backsliders of Ephesus: “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,” an appeal which suggests a condition of indifference, or at least inertness, which is not adapted to the filling of our mission as Christians. Christians who have been shining lights sometimes burn dim, and the wick smokes, and they fall into that sleep of religious apathy where they give no light. It is a strange thing, but true, that one may be asleep and neither himself nor his neigh-

bor be conscious of it. Some people talk in their sleep, and some Christians continue to talk as volubly as ever after they are spiritually asleep. Some Christians have periods of hibernation, as do bears, and at such times they become much like bears in many other respects as well. These facts are the saddest facts in our modern Christianity. Every man or woman in the Church whose light has gone out, or has never been really lighted, pulls down the average, and reduces the moral and spiritual power of the Church as a whole. We can not estimate the moral power by numbers. It is not quantity, but quality, which counts in light-giving. It is possible to have an electric light that will have more power of illumination than a thousand tallow candles. Now, the light-giving power of the Christian does not depend upon his wealth, or his intellectual ability, or his culture. A man may have all these, and walk in darkness; and he may have little of these, and yet be a blazing light marking the path toward heaven. Some of the brightest lights that have ever shone for Christ have been men and women who were as poverty-stricken as was their divine Lord, and who

had but a small measure of educational advantage, or purely intellectual culture. There is a culture of the soul brought about under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, which is infinitely more important.

Active service in the Christian life is the essential condition of growth in character. More Christians lose the fervor of their devotion and the keen edge of their joy through spiritual idleness than in almost any other way. Sailors tell us there is a dead spot in the Caribbean Sea. It lies midway between Cartagena, in Colombia, and Kingston, Jamaica. It is out of the steamer tracks, and the action of the great currents going one way and another has left a space of stagnant water without any real movement at all. Anything that gets into "the dead spot" is apt to stay there unless driven out by some big storm, and will simply drift round and round, gathering sea-grass and barnacles. There is "a dead spot" in the sea of religious life, a place out of the currents where a good many Christian people seem to drift. They do not give themselves over to serve the devil in any active way, neither do they serve God with any earnest enthusiasm or

purpose; they drift about in the dead spot, gathering barnacles of doubt and prejudice. It is a fearful fate to lie becalmed in such stagnant water, in an earnest world so full of purpose as this.

When Admiral Dewey came back from his great victories in the Orient, he was given a patriotic reception at Winsted, Connecticut. The bells were rung, and to add to the happy noise, an old cannon, one which was captured from the Confederate forces during the war, was taken in hand to see if it could be fired. It was found to be spiked. A hole was bored into it and a small charge of powder put in and touched off. The result was the discharge of an old shell from the cannon. It fell helplessly about eight rods from the mouth of the cannon. The incident is suggestive of Christians who were once good soldiers for Jesus Christ and did valiant service for Him, sending shells into the hosts of evil with devastating force, but, through failure to do their duty, or worldliness, they are like this old spiked cannon and are no longer any hindrance to the devil or any help to the Church.

Backsliding often begins through a timidi-

ty which grows into cowardice if yielded to, and causes the Christian to fail in open and avowed loyalty to Christ. Jesus asks us for an open confession. He tells us that if we will confess Him before men, He will confess us before the entire universe. And it is impossible for us to live as tho we were ashamed of Jesus, refraining from open loyalty to Him, without losing Christian enthusiasm and joy out of our hearts.

Frances Ridley Havergal says that when she went into a boarding-school as a pupil, just after she confest Christ, she was startled to find that among a hundred girls she was the only one that had made a public confession of Christ. Her first feeling was that she could not avow her love for Christ with all that company of worldly girls around her. But her second thought was that she could not but avow it, since she was the only one Christ had there to represent Him. This thought was most strengthening, and that decision began a life that was wonderfully blest as God's messenger throughout her career.

Once in an English dining-room some twenty men were seated around a table from

which the ladies had withdrawn. After the ladies had retired, the conversation took a turn which was evil in its suggestion, and sneering and contemptuous in its spirit toward Christianity. One young man who had sat until he could bear it no longer, rang the bell for his carriage, and courteously taking leave of his host, explained his going away by saying, graciously but firmly, that he was still a Christian. The young man who dared do that simple Christlike act lived to be Sir Robert Peel. Such incidents suggest to us those solemn words of Jesus: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of My words, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Any man or woman who takes the attitude of these noble souls and maintains it will never backslide. But if we permit ourselves to fall in with the current of opposition to Christ, we crucify Him afresh, and at the same time we crucify our own Christian lives.

Worldliness is the greatest danger of the Christian. We must live the Christian life in the midst of the world. We have our work to do by which we earn our bread, we

have our relations with the world about us, and our Christianity must be the spirit and motive power of our living in the midst of all these earthly relations. Christians are often overthrown and destroyed by their very success in worldly matters. We need to be careful that in seizing hold of this world's affairs we do not lose that which is worth infinitely more than all this world. Jesus says, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." We need to hold on to this world lightly that we do not lose our grasp of those things that are of eternal worth.

A colony of American eagles has made its home along the shore at Chautauqua Lake, New York, for many years. A gentleman living near that lake one day witnessed a very remarkable incident. He was watching an eagle as it gracefully soared over the lake, when it suddenly darted with lightning rapidity toward the water, catching in its talons a maskinonge two feet or more in length, and weighing probably ten pounds. There was a clash and a splashing of fins and feathers, but slowly the bird rose in the air with its captive dangling and wriggling

below. When at a height of about one thousand feet, the bird, still clinging to the fish, began to sink slowly toward the lake again, gaining speed as it descended, and finally fell with a splash in the water. Later the bird and fish were found together dead. The fish had evidently been too heavy for the eagle to carry, but its claws were so firmly imbedded in the flesh that it could not release its hold, and as its strength gave way it sunk into the water and was drowned. The Christian is sometimes overcome by the world in the same way. His affections become so set upon worldly things that, tho he struggles to fly toward heaven, he is drawn back to the earth and drowned by his very success.

In some parts of the Southwest it is not uncommon for a river to be lost. Through the North Arkansas Valley one may sometimes find a creek running half-way to the wagon-hubs; but if you would follow down it for a mile or two you may come to a crossing where the channel is a bed of gravel, dry and dusty, without water in sight, above or below. With some streams that is the last of them. But with others it is

different: the water which has sunk noiselessly into a bed of sand at one place appears a few miles farther on and becomes again a brave and vigorous stream. One sees something like that in the career of some Christians. Sometimes we see one who has begun a Christian life with a strong, hopeful enthusiasm, that went singing on his way with a joyous heart, giving cheer to every one that witnessed his life, but in the course of a year or two there comes a time of difficulty, when the hot sun of opposition shines upon him, and then he sinks away and is lost in the perplexities of life. Sometimes that is the last of that Christian career. But to others there comes a resurrection. Some earnest call of God's providence, some heart-searching appeal from the pulpit, some sudden punishment following on sin, awakens the conscience, stirs the will to action, and the man or the woman rouses again to duty and flows on in open testimony to Christ. It is better to be never lost at all, but greater folly to remain lost when Christ comes seeking to save.

I am sure I must be speaking to some who have known the gladness and joy of the

Christian life, whose hearts have echoed the music of communion and fellowship with Christ, who through worldliness and sin have lost that heavenly music out of the heart. If that is true, then there has come to you the saddest loss that could come to a human soul. I would that I could turn you again to a search for that lost music.

The cathedral of the quaint Irish city of Limerick was erected by the King of Limerick, Donald O'Brien, toward the close of the twelfth century. The building is chiefly remarkable for its magnificent peal of bells, with which a beautiful legend is associated. The bells were made by a young, enthusiastic Italian, and were the result of his ambition to produce so beautiful a peal as to be absolutely unrivaled. They were the fruit of many years of labor, and at last were hung in a monastery in Italy, being the delight of all who heard their music. The Italian bought a house in the vicinity of the convent, and for years passed his evenings in listening to the sweet chimes. During a national feud, however, the bells were stolen, and broken-hearted, their maker, an old man now, left his native shores to go in search of them. He set

sail for Ireland, and was sitting on deck when the ship was sailing up the Shannon. Suddenly the strains of melodious bells were borne on the evening air across the city to the quiet dreamer in the boat. As he listened, he became entranced; he could not be mistaken. They were indeed the cherished sounds of his long-lost bells, which had been hung in the cathedral of Limerick. With his earnest face set stedfastly toward the church, his fingers gradually relaxed their hold on the side of the vessel, and when the ship arrived in port, he was dead. Some of you have been beset by robber lusts and passions, and have lost the sweet music of faith and hope and innocence out of your hearts. Your search may be happier than he of the old legend. You need not wait for death to find the lost music, for Jesus Christ is able, through forgiveness, to revive the musical powers of your soul and cause the chords of your nature to vibrate in harmony with the heart of God.

I do not wish to close without saying an earnest word to some of you who still hold your place in the Church of Christ and count yourselves Christians, but have lost the glow

and the beauty of your Christian experience. There is only one way to regain the true beauty of Christian experience, and that is in the same humility of confession and surrender by which you first found Christ as your Savior.

At the foot of a cliff, under the windows of the Castle Miramar, formerly the residence of Maximilian, the Mexican emperor, at a depth of eighty feet below the surface of the Adriatic's clear waters, is a kind of cage fashioned by divers in the face of the rock. In that cage are some of the most magnificent pearls in existence. They belong to Archduchess Rainer. Having been left unworn for a long time, the gems lost their color, and became "sick," and experts were unanimous in declaring that the only way to restore their original brilliancy was to submit them to a prolonged immersion in the depths of the sea. They have been lying there now a number of years and are gradually regaining their former unrivaled beauty.

My dear friend, your soul is the jewel of God, and if its glory has been dimmed through sensuality and earthliness, it can never recover the colors of heaven except

it be brought through prayer and self-devotion into fellowship with God. From Him first came its life and beauty, and only as you return it to Him can its stained and faded splendor be restored.

THE VIRTUE OF MILD REPLIES TO ANGRY SPEECHES

“A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.”—Prov. 15: 1.

THE captain of a British steamer coming into Philadelphia a while ago said that one morning on the voyage across the Atlantic he found himself in the midst of a tremendous storm. The waves were so high that they broke clear over the bow, and considerable damage was wrought to the rail and deck-houses. With the advancing day the wind increased, and toward ten o'clock was blowing a northeast gale and they shipped some heavy seas. But at exactly 10:51 a marvelous transformation occurred. Just when the waves were apparently the highest and were pounding with frightful fury against the ship, in the twinkling of an eye the disturbance ceased absolutely. The captain said it was impossible to describe the

wonderful appearance of the sea at the moment. Astern of them vast mountains of water reared their white crests against the leaden sky, while directly ahead, as far as the eye could see, the ocean was smooth, not a wave breaking—only a long, heavy swell. A sharply defined line seemed to separate the tumultuous and the comparatively calm waters. For a moment the captain and his officers were nonplused. The aspect of the sea was, however, so peculiar that the captain ordered a bucket of water drawn up. Imagine his surprize when he found that on it rested a thin scum of petroleum. Then the truth flashed across him in an instant. He knew he was sailing directly in the course pursued by oil-steamers bound for Europe, and he presumed at once that there was no explanation for the presence of the oil other than that some tankard had, either purposely or otherwise, poured oil on the troubled waters. Every one of us has times when it is wise to pour oil on the tumultuous waves of human feeling. One of them is on occasions such as that indicated by the writer of our text, when he says, “A soft answer turneth away wrath.”

A soft answer is the most effective answer that any one can give to an angry speech. In our hot temper it is hard for us to believe that. We think we need to shout and make people tremble and shake in order to answer their angry speech, but it is not so. We never make a greater blunder than when we think that. Always and forever the most effective answer is that which is mild and gentle.

A young man inquired of his pastor, "Do you think it would be wrong for me to learn the noble art of self-defense?" "Certainly not," was the reply. "I learned it in youth myself, and have found it of great value in life." "Indeed, sir. What system did you learn?" "I learned Solomon's system, laid down in the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of Proverbs: 'A soft answer turneth away wrath.' It is the best system of self-defense of which I have ever heard." And out of the dim, misty past comes an example which we of modern times may remember. Euclid, the founder of the Megaric sect of philosophy, was one day reproached for a fancied affront by his brother, who in great anger finally said: "Let me perish if I be

not avenged on you.” To this Euclid made noble reply, “And let me perish, if I do not subdue your resentment by forbearance, and make you love me as much as ever.”

In his contention that softness is more effective than harshness, Solomon is in perfect harmony with our modern science. After Mr. Harvey produced his wonderful steel-plate armor, inventors of projectiles endeavored for some time, in vain, to make a shot that would penetrate it. The hardest, toughest shots would be destroyed on impact with the face of the plate. By an extraordinary and paradoxical device, a shell was finally rendered capable of passing through a ten-inch Harveyized plate. The inventor simply placed a cap of soft steel on the point of the shell. It is a human impulse to meet wrath with wrath, hardness with hardness; but, both in morals and physics, experience proves that a little gentleness accomplishes more than unyielding rigidity.

But we do not need to turn to science, for there is not one of us who has not seen our text illustrated a hundred times in the ordinary life of the day. A kindly, genial old lawyer bought a farm down in Maine, where

there had been a lawsuit going on for many years with a neighbor about the boundary line. The lawyer went to see the obstinate neighbor at once and found the man ready for a fight. The lawyer mildly inquired, "What's your claim here, anyway, as to this fence?" "I insist," replied the neighbor, "that your fence is over on my land two feet at one end and one foot at least at the other." "Well," replied the lawyer, "you go ahead just as quick as you can and set your fence over. At the end where you say that I encroach on you two feet set the fence on my land four feet. At the other end push it on my land two feet." "But," persisted the astonished neighbor, "that's twice what I claim." "I don't care about that," said the genial lawyer. "There's been fight enough over this land. I want you to take enough so you are perfectly satisfied, and then we can get along pleasantly. Go ahead and help yourself." The old farmer paused, abashed. He had been ready to commence the old struggle tooth and nail, but this move of the new neighbor stunned him. Yet he wasn't to be outdone in generosity. After looking at the lawyer a moment, he said, "Squire, that

fence ain't going to be moved an inch. I don't want the land. There wasn't nuthin' in the fight, anyway, but the principle of the thing."

The soft answer to the angry speech is not only an effective weapon, but it often gives the one who uses it a power for blessing the one who is angry with him. No power is so great as that of kindness. There is an old legend of St. Francis and his taming the wolf of Gubio. It is not a very probable story, but it is interesting and very instructive in its suggestion. The wolf described in the legend was an animal utterly without morals; it had not only eaten lambs and goats, but also men. All attempts to kill him failed, and the townsfolk were afraid of venturing outside the walls even in the broad daylight. One day St. Francis, against the advice of all, went out to have a serious talk with the wolf. He soon found him. "Brother Wolf," he said, "you have eaten not only animals, but men made in the image of God, and certainly you deserve the gallows; nevertheless, I wish to make peace between you and these people, Brother Wolf, so that you may offend them no more, and neither they nor their dogs shall attack you."

The wolf seemed to agree, but the saint wished to have a distinct proof of his solemn engagement to fulfil his part in the peace, whereupon the wolf stood up on his hind legs and laid his paw on the saint's hand. Francis then promised that the wolf should be properly fed for the rest of his days. "For well I know," he said, kindly, "that all your evil deeds are caused by hunger." The contract, so the story runs, was kept on both sides, and the wolf lived happily for two years, at the end of which he died of old age, sincerely mourned by all the inhabitants. Whatever we may think of the story, it has in it a vein of eternal truth which is ever working out in ordinary life.

One of the most interesting stories in the Bible, which is the most interesting of all the story-books in the world, is the one that tells how Abigail saved her husband from the wrath of David. It was in David's younger days, when he was still in exile, hiding from the wrath of Saul. David had been spending several months in the wilderness of Paran, and there was a man who lived near by in Maon by the name of Nabal, who had a great sheep ranch that stretched back on to the

slopes of Mount Carmel. Nabal was a very rich man for that day. He had a herd of three thousand sheep, and in addition he had a thousand goats. These flocks were in constant danger of bands of robbers from the Philistines, who would come up every now and then, sneaking about to see what they might steal. If they caught a sheep-herder with a nice bunch of fat sheep off at a distance from his friends, they would swoop down on him and kill the herder and drive away the sheep for their own feeding. David, and his band of brave soldiers who were with him, had not only not molested these herders and their flocks, but they had protected them and saved them again and again from their enemies. And so it went on until sheep-shearing time in Carmel. About this time David and his men were pretty hard up for something to eat. Game had not been plenty and it took a good deal to feed several hundred men. So one day David picked out ten young men, and told them to go over to Nabal's sheep ranch at Carmel, and give him David's greeting, and remind Nabal that David and his men had been good neighbors to them, and at considerable risk and sacrifice

had protected them from their enemies, and as they now were in need, a taste of mutton would come very handy, and would be greatly appreciated by David and his followers. The message was couched in the kindest of language, and considering the circumstances, and the great gain which had come to Nabal through David's honesty and kindness, was not by any means an unreasonable request. But Nabal was a hot-headed fool. He was rather an unusual combination. Ordinarily the stingy, miserly man is level-headed and cool, while the red-headed man, who goes off the handle at a flash and is quick-tempered, is likely to be generous-hearted and liberal. But Nabal had all the bad qualities and none of the good ones. He was both stingy and hot-tempered. And so when the young men came to him with David's message he was mad through and through in a moment. He met the young men with insult upon insult. "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse?" shouted Nabal in his wrath. And he ran on with the most insulting overflow of temper about David's relation to Saul, and vowed that he would not give him anything, or have anything to do with him. He had

been perfectly willing to take David's protection, but he had only insult and wrath when David asked some recognition of it.

Well, when the young men came back and told David, it was like putting a lighted match to a stack of tinder. There was fire burning in a moment. David and his men were hungry, and hungry men are easily angered. So David ordered his men into the saddle and with every man's sword at his thigh, four hundred of them went riding away toward Carmel, vowing not to leave root or branch of Nabal or his flocks. A tragedy would have occurred that would have been a blot on the record of David had not an unusual occurrence intervened.

Nabal had a very bright and beautiful wife. Strange how some of these stingy, ugly men do have such fine wives. Poor Abigail had to spend a good part of her time getting Nabal out of the troubles into which his folly plunged him. So as soon as Abigail heard of what had happened at the sheep-shearing kraal, she knew that unless she did something to prevent it, terrible ruin would come down upon the ranch. So Abigail set herself to work without delay. She took two hundred

loaves of bread, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready drest, and five measures of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and had the pack animals brought around, and she sent her servants on before her with these loaded animals. Of course, she told Nabal nothing about this. She had known him long enough to know that that would do no good. She came riding along behind her peace offering. At last they met David and his men, and as soon as she saw him coming she alighted from the animal she was riding and bowed herself down to the ground before David, and cried aloud, "Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine

own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid."

This wonderful speech so full of kindness and wisdom, went straight to the heart of

David and brought the blush of shame to his cheek, and with generous words he spoke to her, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand."

Dear friends, let us learn a lesson from this wonderful story out of God's Word. Not by avenging ourselves, not by giving back wrath for wrath, shall we find success and peace. But peace is found on the other path—a mild reply for the angry speech. If we do that, we may trust God to take care of our side and we shall plant no thorns in our own pillow to give us pain and sleeplessness in the years to come.

WISDOM BETTER THAN GOLD

“How much better is it to get wisdom than gold.”—
Prov. 16:16.

THE greatest personal blessing of life is to be found in cheerfulness. A contented, happy condition of mind and heart is the greatest human good. In comparing wisdom—which on Solomon’s tongue is another name for goodness—with gold, it is necessary to consider what each of them will bring. Of course, gold in itself, to keep, is of no more value than clay. Its value lies in what it will purchase. If it will buy more comfort, more happiness, more cheerful content than this heavenly wisdom that Solomon means, then, of course, it is the more precious treasure of the two. But Solomon, who had a tremendous opportunity to try the experiment, declares that gold has a very limited purchasing power when it goes into the market for happiness. For happiness can not be manufactured out of external conditions. Doctor

Brierly, a shrewd English philosopher, calls attention to the fact that the sunniest quarters of the globe contain the somberest people. Africa and Asia are deluged with light and warmth, and yet they have the most sorrowful population on the earth. And the same thing is true when you undertake to create happiness by accumulation and possession of worldly treasures. Many men wear out body and soul in their struggle for wealth and position, to find, often enough, when they have reached them, that they are infinitely more dull than they were when they started. I saw a description the other day of a gentleman and his wife who are rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and the writer says of them: "They are rich much beyond their desire of expenditure; they have the most elevated rank of their country; I know of nothing to disturb their happiness, and yet they are apparently the most miserable people I ever saw."

Neither is it true that happiness comes from great genius and talent. Some of the greatest minds of the world have been the most miserable. It is doubtless true that Thomas Carlyle had, in many ways, the most

brilliant mind of his time, but if you will read over his moanings I think you will come to the conclusion that his dog was, as a rule, a good deal the happier of the two.

What, then, is the secret of happiness? Undoubtedly it is not artificial. It has to do with the inner condition of the soul. It must rise from harmony between the soul of man and the soul of God. Romanes, the great scientist, who became an infidel and afterward found his way back again to faith and happiness, gives it as his final judgment that "The nature of man without God is thoroughly miserable." True poise of soul, which will give cheerful content and noble courage for all the struggles of life, can only come through the highest wisdom born of faith in God and a devotion to His will.

I have given you in this introduction the substance and core of our theme. It remains only to illustrate it and impress it on our minds. It is worth while to emphasize and reemphasize, and ring the changes on the fact that gold can not buy happiness. There is no market-place on earth where a man can surely go and trade money for happiness. I know of a man who died a while ago in one

of our Eastern cities who was estimated to have been worth many millions of dollars. But the miserly spirit had so grown upon him that during the last years of his life he suffered from constant fear that he would die in want. For several years it had been necessary to have a trained nurse constantly in attendance on him. One day, a year or so before his death, he called the nurse to him and said: "I feel very grateful for all you have done for me and I would like to have you stay, but I can't afford to undergo unnecessary expense, and now that I am feeling better, I think I shall have to let you go." The nurse reported to the family what the millionaire said, and it was then arranged that she should tell the old man that, rather than leave a place that she had held so long, she would work for nothing. He agreed to let her stay until she had found another place. So the nurse remained with him until the end. Surely his fifty millions of dollars could not have been a very great comfort to him while thus haunted with his inability to surround himself with necessary comforts. Let no man imagine that money is the great necessity of life, nor, indeed, the great luxury. A pure

heart, a clean mind, an assurance that we are pleasing God, and that all things must work together for our good can give more happiness than any number of millions of dollars.

Men who depend upon gold for their happiness universally find that it loses its power to minister even to the body as the years go on. When the greatest of all the Vanderbilts and the founder of the wealth of the family came toward the end of his career, he said to a friend: "I don't see what good it does me—all this money that you say is mine. I can't eat it; I can't spend it; in fact, I never saw it. I dress no better than my private secretary, and can not eat as much as my coachman. I live in a big servants' boarding-house, am bothered to death by beggars, have dyspepsia, can not drink champagne, and most of my money is in the hands of others, who use it mainly for their benefit." It is a terrible thing to come toward the end of life and find yourself condemned to live among the husks. But there is no way to avoid it if the mind and heart are given up to material things during the growing and working years of your career. Surely no one is so great a

fool as the man who lays up treasure for himself, but is not rich toward God.

Wisdom is infinitely better than gold, from the fact that there is no power in gold to broaden the soul, to deepen the affections, or clarify the spiritual vision. Indeed, it is the common observation of men that the gaining of money very frequently narrows the vision, and makes its possessor hard and unfeeling. On the other hand, true wisdom, that comes from goodness, from a humble relation to God, mellows and enriches the soil of the human heart. It deepens the sense of brotherhood toward humanity. It clears the sky of clouds and lifts the soul into high and holy fellowships.

One of the most wonderful conversions in modern times—indeed, one that might be compared with that of the Apostle Paul—was the transformation of J. J. Tissot, the great painter, whose monumental work was the illustration of the Bible, and who died only a few years ago. He was a man of wealth and fashion and frivolity, and immensely popular as a painter. His account of his conversion is a wonderful thing. He did not pretend to understand it. It was at

a time when he was painting a series of fifteen pictures representing the pursuits of the society women of Paris. At that time it was fashionable to sing in the choir of some great church, and one of the series of pictures was to be entitled "The Choir Singer." He wished to make a study for this picture, and with this purpose in mind, he went to the Church of St. Sulpice during mass, more to catch the atmosphere for his picture than to worship. But to his astonishment, he found himself joining in the devotion, and as he bowed his head and closed his eyes he saw a strange and thrilling picture. It seemed to him that he was looking at the ruins of a modern castle. The windows were broken, the cornices and drains lay shattered on the ground, cannon-balls and broken bowls added to the debris, and a peasant and his wife picked their way over the littered ground. Wearily the man threw down the bundle that contained their all, and the woman seated herself on a fallen pillar, burying her face in her hands. Her husband, too, sat down, but, in pity for her sorrow, strove to sit upright, to play the man, even in misfortune. And then there came a strange Figure gliding

toward these human ruins over the broken remnants of the castle. Its feet and hands were pierced and bleeding, its head was wreathed with thorns, while from its shoulders fell an Oriental cloak inscribed with the scenes, "The Fall of Man," and the "Kiss of Judas." And this Figure, needing no name, seated itself by the man and leaned its head upon his shoulder, seeming to say more by the outstretched hands than in words: "See, I have been more miserable than you; I am the solution of all your problems; without me civilization is a ruin." The vision pursued him even after he had left the church. It stood between him and his canvas. He tried to brush it away, but it returned insistently. It was the Christ.

Tissot, the man of the world, the painter of the frivolities of wealth, tells us that he went out of the church in a dream. Here, he thought, is a grand theme; here is a picture. He tried to put aside the thought. He must finish his series; he had no time; he was not a man to paint sacred pictures. Still, he could not return to his usual work. The vision he had seen possessed his eyes by day and by night. At last it drove him into a fever; he

was long ill; but when he recovered, that persistent vision still dwelt within his soul. He had to paint it. He did it—the picture called “Inward Voices”—but he fell short of his ideal, as men always must; still, he gave shape to the vision of Him who died to succor all, even the lowliest of men and women.

After this it was impossible for him to return to society pictures. He determined to paint Christ Himself as he thought He ought to be painted. There seemed to be something lacking in all the pictures intended for Christ. Some of them were powerful; they were effective; but they were types of the Christ of the sixth, the tenth, the fourteenth, the sixteenth century; not one of the real Christ of the first century, the Christ who made the centuries. He decided that there was but one way to reach him. He must go to the Holy Land. No sooner did he make the resolution than he departed. Then came the supreme struggle. “How can I dare?” he said to himself, “the painter of follies, to approach the holiest of subjects, the Redeemer?” This drove him to his knees. In deep humility, at the mercy seat, he cleansed his heart; he laved his soul with purity, and rose up with

a new strength and a firm resolve. When, at last, he set foot on the sacred soil, when he looked upon the scenes consecrated to Christendom for all time by the presence of Christ, his heart was all aglow with love and devotion to the Savior. He often found tears in his eyes; his hand shook, and again and again he had to pause to recover his self-control. What a wonderful story of the emerging of a soul out of a mere superficial life of worldly art and worldly frivolities into the real life of true wisdom which lifts man up into his divine relation of sonship to God.

True wisdom is infinitely better than gold in the superior power which it gives us to be a blessing to others. Wealth without wisdom is not only a curse to the man who has it, but often his use of it is a plague to the world. But the highest wisdom, which is a combination of goodness ruled by love, makes it possible for the possessor to awaken latent powers for good in other people.

A scientific man of unquestionable authority, who has been making a geological investigation for the government of the island of Haiti, says that as he was engaged in a microscopic investigation of the gold-bearing

river sands, he observed that the thirteen-year-old daughter of his companion had only to lay the flat of her hand on the sands and particles of gold-dust would adhere to it. Every time she repeated the action, the palm of her hand was almost covered with the gold-dust, that continued to cling to it. Whenever she grasped a handful of sand, she would shake her hand; the sand would fall to the ground, but the flakes of gold would remain clinging to her hand. No other person in the company had that peculiar ability. This remarkable fact convinced the scientist that there is in nature a power whose influence in attracting gold is similar to that which magnetism exerts on iron, and this little girl possess that power. There is a great spiritual power like that. Jesus possess it supremely. Whoever He talked with, whether a beggar, a swindler, a demoniac, or a harlot, he brought out of them at once that which was pure gold in their character. That which was bad in them fell away, but the good clung to Christ. We want that same divine spirit in us as Christians in order to be of the greatest possible help to the world.

All the beautiful work of the world is done

in this spirit of wise love. Hate mars, envy destroys harmony, selfishness brings everything into a snarl; but love unravels all tangles and brings back the note of peace; love, working upon the heart and on the life, day by day, fashions the beautiful face of Jesus in the soul where He has mastery and control.

There is a legend that a century ago, in an old cathedral in Europe, there was on one of the arches a sculptured face of marvelous beauty. It was long hidden, until one day the sun's light, striking through a slanted window, revealed its matchless features. And year after year, upon the days when for a brief hour it was illuminated, crowds came and waited eagerly to catch but a glimpse of that face. It had a strange history. When the cathedral was being built, an old man, broken with the weight of years and care, came and besought the architect to let him work upon it. Out of pity for his age, but fearful lest his failing sight and trembling touch might mar some fair design, the master set him to work in the shadows of the vaulted roof. One day they found the old man asleep in death. The tools of his craft

were laid in order by his side. The cunning hand was forever stilled. His face was upturned to the marvelous face which he had wrought there—the face of One whom he had loved. The artists and sculptors and workmen from all parts of the cathedral came and looked upon that face and they said: “This is the greatest work of all; love wrought this.”

Oh, my friends, let love, holy, divine, all-glorious love, have a fair chance to work in your heart and soul, and under these cunning fingers there shall be sculptured in your thoughts and imaginations, in your affections and ideals, in your conduct, in your character and in your career, the face of the One who is “altogether lovely.”

THE GREATEST CONQUEROR IN THE WORLD

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.”—Prov. 16: 32.

THE mightiest conqueror in the world is the man who is master of himself. There have been men able to control armies and rule nations who fell, miserably defeated by some ignominious passion or appetite within their own nature. The greatest of men have often failed of doing their best work in the world through lack of self-control.

John Adams, the second President of the United States, was not a popular statesman, even with his own party. Few doubted the purity of his patriotism or the integrity of the man. While he was President, his party, that of the Federalists, was ruined. He was succeeded by his great rival, Thomas Jefferson. The night before the inauguration of Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Adams left the city of

Washington. On reaching an inn, a short distance from Baltimore, it is said, he noticed a portrait of Washington hanging in the public room. Walking up to it, and placing his fingers on his lips, he exclaimed: "If I had kept my lips as close as that man, I should now be President of the United States."

The anecdote illustrates the moral superiority of the first President to the second. Washington was, intellectually, the inferior of Adams. But he was a prudent man. His speech was governed by discretion. His temper, naturally as violent as that of Adams, had been early in life put under subjection. It seldom escaped from the control of his firm will. These characteristics made him a better President than John Adams.

But John Adams was not alone among rulers who have been shamed by their lack of self-mastery. Peter the Great, in 1722, issued an edict that all masters who maltreated their servants should be considered insane and guardians appointed. Peter himself so maltreated his gardener that he died from the effects of it. "Alas, alas," said the Czar, "I have civilized my own subjects, I have conquered other nations, yet I have not been

able to civilize and conquer myself. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' "

The great secret of a noble manhood and a glorious womanhood is, by God's help, to enthrone within our own bosom a ruler who will be stronger than all outside influences that can be brought to bear against us. The little boy had it right when he came into the house one day and said: "Mother, I don't have to cry when I fall down," and the little fellow's brown eyes sparkled with the light of a new discovery. "I can make myself stop. I just say, 'Stop that,' and then I make me mind me."

It was indeed a great discovery—the power of self-mastery. For every human being the beauty and the worth of life lie just along that line—the recognition of the higher self and the subjugation of the lower to its authority, the compelling me to obey me. All strength of character and usefulness begin in learning that the law which really controls us must come from within. Many a life, rich in possibilities and talent, is weak just here; the soul has never been crowned sovereign, and

every clamoring voice of whim or passion rules for the hour it lasts.

One of the greatest illustrations of the power of self-mastery in the development of a career may be found in Henry M. Stanley, the famous traveler and discoverer. From the outer pale of human life, an orphan without a name, Stanley, by sheer force of self-exertion, made himself an honored citizen of the world, and died a member of the House of Commons—perhaps the best-known member of it. When Stanley came back from Africa he said: “For myself I lay no claim to any exceptional fineness of nature. But I say that, beginning life as a rough, ill-educated, impatient man, I have found my schooling in these very African experiences. I have learned by actual stress of imminent danger that self-control is more indispensable than gunpowder, and that persistent self-control is impossible without real, heartfelt sympathy.”

The power of self-control has its noblest illustration in the willingness to deny one's self of that which the lower nature desires in order to attain the development or success of something which is still more impor-

tant. Phillips Brooks once said in one of his great sermons that a man could be judged best by what he was able to do without. And true self-mastery means that we are able to do without anything that stands between us and our truest usefulness in the world. It was related recently of an English oculist, that he had given up cricket purely in the interest of his profession. He was very fond of the game, but found that playing affected the delicacy of his touch and made him less ready for the work he was required to do every day upon the eyes of his patients. A pianist said the other day that he had given up riding his bicycle, because grasping the bars stiffened the muscles of his fingers and affected his playing.

Now all these things were not bad in themselves, but they became bad when they became the enemy of that which was better. Remember that the good, if we are satisfied with it and do not try to make it better, becomes the deadly foe of the best.

But there is another side to this special thought, of the greatest possible importance. That is, the willingness to set ourselves against every dangerous fascination that

may cause us to lose control over ourselves. I was living in New York City during the years when Dr. Samuel J. Kennedy was tried three times for his life, charged with a most sensational murder in that city. The circumstantial evidence was very strong against him. He stoutly maintained his innocence, and was finally discharged after three trials, when perhaps most people had become convinced that he was innocent. I think the strongest temperance sermon that I ever heard or read, the one which imprest me most thoroughly with the folly of strong drink, and the utterly insane and wicked recklessness of any young man who will tamper with the wine-glass, was the statement which Dr. Kennedy made after he was finally discharged. These are his earnest and startling words: "Before the words of a man who has been three times in the shadow of death, and who knows what it is to stand face to face with his God, have lost interest to the newspaper-reading public, I wish, through what I consider the best medium, to utter a few words of warning to every young man and woman: Do not touch the first drop of wine or liquor. Shun them as you would

a snake. Because, if you do not, they will ruin you as they have well-nigh ruined me and brought me into the very atmosphere of an ignominious death. Two cocktails brought me where I am to-day, despised for a crime I did not commit, convicted in the minds of thousands, tho I am innocent of Dolly Reynolds' murder. They have cast a blur on the name of my child, have ruined my dear wife's health, and filled my parents' hair with silver lines before their quiet lives merited it. I have charged up all my three years of frightful wretchedness to the liquor that stupefied my memory. The night that Dolly Reynolds was murdered I could not recollect those who had seen me and who could have proved an alibi. Those cocktails, with the chloral I took for my neuralgia, constituted knockout drops. If I hadn't drunk the cocktails it would have taken me only fifteen minutes to clear myself instead of three years. I wish it were possible for me to talk personally to each and every young person who finds pleasure in the social cup. I would convince them that they are playing with fire, joking with misery, laughing in the face of death. Leave drink alone, young people! It

may not involve you, and those you love, in a miserable murder case; but it will just as surely entail misery and suffering as it will enslave your senses and enfeeble your body."

Surely there could not be a stronger illustration of the danger which constantly besets the path of every man or woman who is careless of the influence of any habit, the tendency of which is to cause the loss of self-mastery. And if I speak to any who are conscious of having already lost that control, and know that certain appetites and passions are too great for you to master in your own strength, then I beg you to let me call you to a strength higher than your own, which it is possible for you to bring to your aid. It is said that Mr. Henry Drummond on one occasion was asked to remonstrate with a coachman who had yielded to the love of drink. He put the question to the man, "Suppose your horses ran away and you lost control of them, and they turned down a steep hill, what should you do?" The man confessed his inability to do anything under those circumstances. "But suppose," said Drummond, "some one sat by your side who was stronger than you are, what should you do?"

“I should give him the reins,” was the reply. Mr. Drummond turned to the man and pointed out to him that his life had run away with him; that he had lost the control of his passions and appetites. But he told him that Christ was near, and besought him to give to Christ the reins.

True self-mastery must always come through true loyalty to Jesus Christ our Savior in all the departments of our life. If through fellowship with Christ we have self-control, then our religion becomes harmonious, and its mastery is over body and mind and soul. It must always be that to be of value to us. Our personality is a whole; we are not built in compartments like the new steamship. I am sure there is too much setting of our religion aside as a sort of annex. Have you noticed that most hotels which have an annex do not really have it annexed? The annex is usually down the street a block, or across the street. Well, a great many people keep their religion like that. They don't keep it in the same building where they cook and eat and trade and sleep. It is an annex for eternity. When this life is full and running over and done with, they think they

will need the annex; and so they pay taxes on it and keep it in order for emergencies. Now that is not the Gospel idea of religion. Religion is for this life. If this life is all right, heaven will come in the regular order. Many men want to go to heaven without taking into consideration whether they would fit the place when they got there.

A young girl who was eager, ambitious, and restless for many things, once heard two sentences that transformed her life. They were these: "Would you be known? Then be worth knowing." In a flash she saw how cheap an ambition hers had been, and how selfish. Who was she, to long for the friendship of high souls? What had she to give in return for the treasure of their lives? In humility and sorrow she prayed again, no longer that she might be known, but that in God's good time her own life might grow strong and beautiful, that she might prove worthy of all blessings that were given her. Thus as the years went on she was ever lifted into nobler and higher fellowships.

Tell me what your religion is doing for you now, and I can predict what it will do for you hereafter. You need not think that a

religion which does not keep you from being cross and surly and suspicious and envious and dishonest now in this life will be worth anything to you in eternity. It surely will not. The first fruits of religion are here.

“Well, have you got any religion to-day?” asked a Christian friend of a shoemaker somewhat noted for the simple and joyous earnestness of his religion. “Just enough to make a good shoe, glory to God!” said he in reply, as with an extra pull he drew his thread firmly to its place. That’s the kind of religion we want—a religion which makes a man do the best possible work right where he is.

The history of Christianity from the days of Jesus until now bears abundant testimony that it is possible for all classes and conditions of men and women to come into such self-mastery through fellowship with Jesus Christ that they will have power to overcome the bitterest sorrows and the severest trials of human life. It is a sad and pitiable thing that so many who name the name of Jesus do not enter sufficiently into fellowship with Him to permit Him to give them the song of victory which it is possible for them to sing.

I remember that on one occasion in an Eastern city the game wardens discovered in a cold-storage plant thousands of birds, out of season, many of them song-birds, all frozen, dead and cold. Sometimes the Christian is like that. Ruskin says, "All one's life is music if one but touch the notes rightly and in tune;" and again he declares that, "Within men are lutes and singing harps." But how often are these song-birds thrust into the cold storage of selfishness and worldliness and pride until they can not sing. They are frozen birds.

Sometimes, however, we come across a case of this power of the soul to sing in the midst of sorrow which shows the possibility of God's promise being realized, and then how glorious it is.

A traveler accompanied a party of tourists one summer along a country road leading to Killarney, a fine old Irish town. As they came within sight of a cottage standing back from the road, there reached them the sound of singing. The voice was full of sweetness, rich and strong, now and then rising to such lofty strains it seemed like an angel's song, then dropping to the mellow softness of a

mother soothing her babe to sleep. The little company was entranced. What genius in obscurity was here? Some one, surely, born to win fame and fortune when brought forward and trained by suitable teachers.

“If I could ever hope to sing like that!” exclaimed the young man who was driving, himself a student of music, and then, stopping his horses, he said: “Let me find who he is. Perhaps I might be of help.” But here he paused as a young girl came out of the garden gate toward them. She had a basket on her arm, as if going to market. As she passed them, dropping a slight courtesy as she did so, he asked, “Will you please tell me who is singing so sweetly in the cottage?”

“Yes, indeed,” said the girl, turning a bright face toward them. “It is only my uncle Tim, sir; he’s after having a bad turn with his leg, and so he’s just singing the pain away the while.”

For an instant the company was speechless. Then the young man asked, “Is he young? Can he ever get over the trouble? Tell these ladies about it, please?”

“Oh, he is getting a bit old now,” was the answer. “No, the doctors say he’ll never be

the better of it in this world, but"—and her voice dropt into tender pathos—"he's that heavenly good it would come nigh to making you cry sometimes to see him with the tears running down his cheeks with the pain, and then it is he sings the loudest."

THE BLESSEDNESS OF A MERRY HEART

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”—Prov. 17: 22.

WHAT do we mean by a merry heart? The sermon which lies in the text must all depend on that. The dictionaries give this word a thoroughly good character. They say that it expresses feelings of enjoyment and gladness; cheerfulness and light-heartedness; its synonyms are “pleasant,” “delightful,” and “happy.” They give as its secondary meaning: “Playfully cheerful” and “enlivened with gladness or good spirits.” And if we allow the writer of the Book of Proverbs to give us his own idea of the word by a study of other texts in which he uses it, we shall see that this was his understanding of it. In the fifteenth chapter of Proverbs we find him saying, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” And again in that same chapter he says: “He that is of a

merry heart hath a continual feast." And you may easily see what he had in his mind by the very next verse: "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith." Again in the seventeenth chapter of Proverbs our author gives us our text: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

We may dismiss from our minds, then, any lingering prejudice which we may have had against the word. It is a good word, as healthy and wholesome as the spring sunshine or the brook that gurgles down between the hills and goes singing on through the meadows. It is a word full of music and healing, like the fragrance of the balsam fir on the mountains or the chirping of the birds after rain.

It is a word which we apply usually to children. It is a common thing to talk about a merry child, or about little children with merry hearts. We do not so often speak about it with reference to people who have grown up and are mature. Is there not something suggestive in that very fact? The merry heart is an innocent heart. Heavy

burdens and anxieties that come with sin and wrong-doing make the merry heart impossible. All are merry to begin with. How often have we seen the little tots, in the midst of the deepest poverty, with scarcely rags enough to cover them, yet their hearts were merry because they were innocent and without foreboding.

I think we may settle it that the merry heart is always the innocent heart. There may be a certain reckless gaiety where there is a consciousness of sin. A man may grit his teeth and dance over a mine that is soon to explode, as the drunken officers of Napoleon danced at Moscow in the face of the fire that destroyed them. But it is a far cry from a giddy heart like that to the merry heart that doeth good like a medicine.

And now about this medicine of the merry heart. We have a suggestion in the contrast which Solomon gives us, in which he says: "A broken spirit drieth the bones." That means in plain English that if a man is downhearted and discouraged, so that he no longer has any hope, he loses all the strength and zest and enthusiasm out of his life. A discouraged man is whipt before the battle

opens. A man with a broken spirit has no vital force with which to fight. A merry heart, then, furnishes the vitality, the zest, the enthusiasm, the hope, and the courage necessary to make life a sweet and beautiful thing. It furnishes what the springtime furnishes to the woods. Go out in the woods in February, when the snow is on the ground, and when all the earth is locked in ice and frost, and the trees seem to be broken-spirited. They stand stiff and cold and ugly. But when the south wind begins to blow and the sun climbs high in the heavens, and all the marvelous chemistry of springtime begins to work, the merry heart of Nature is soon in evidence. The buds swell on the trees and burst forth into leaves and blossoms; as if by magic, the birds appear, and the nests are builded, and all the forest is alive with insect and bird and animal life, and beauty and song have taken the place of cold and ugliness and death. That is what we mean by a merry heart. There is about it an indescribable charm. It means innocence. It means faith. It means hope. Oh, it means confidence in God that permits the soul to laugh and be glad in God's world.

The merry-hearted man is not a fool. He knows that sickness and ache and pain and death are a part of his lot in this world. He is ready to use such remedies as science has discovered in nature to palliate the pains incident to the body while traveling through the world. But in the midst of all these things, and in spite of them, the merry heart, conscious of rectitude of purpose, and sure that God means good to His children, is a medicine to the mind that keeps him from becoming morbid and from brooding over the aches that must be endured, and, since they must be endured, should, therefore, be endured cheerfully, and carried with a light and happy heart.

A beautiful thing about the merry heart is that it gives the one who possesses it unusual power for blessing to all those who come in contact with him. I remember a deaconess who had a merry heart. Her heart was as innocent and happy as a May morning. She saw lots of sorrow, just as the sun in the heavens sees lots of ice and mud. But it didn't discourage her any more than it does the sunshine. And so, day after day, her merry heart made rosy dimples in her cheeks

and bewitching flashes in her eyes. One day she called at a wretched home where father, mother, and five children were huddled in two dark little rooms. The mother was so discouraged and heart-sick that the sight of that friendly face with the merry heart behind it did her a world of good. The young woman chatted kindly a few moments, and went away; but she came again. In fact, she fell into the habit of "dropping in" often, and more than once the question as to where the next meal was coming from was answered by the appearance of the deaconess with a basket on her arm. She coaxed the ragged, half-starved children to go to Sabbath-school, and brought them clothes to go in. Yes, and she came herself and took them there.

One day the little girl came home with a downcast face, and presently the mother found her crying all by herself. When urged to tell the cause of her grief she sobbed: "I do wish you and father were Christians. Everything is so different where fathers and mothers are Christians."

The mother had little to say to this, but it set her to thinking, and the more she thought the more troubled she became, until one morn-

ing when the deaconess called she broke down entirely and exclaimed: "I can't stand it any longer! I want to be a Christian."

"Then," said the deaconess, "we must kneel right down here and ask the Lord to help you." So the two women knelt in the dirty little kitchen, and the deaconess asked that divine light and peace might come into that shadowed heart; and then the poor woman herself poured out her desires for a better life in a heart-broken prayer.

All this sunshine in the house, all this merry-hearted gladness about him, thawed out the heart of the husband and father, and dried up and conquered the thirst for liquor in him. And within three months from the time that merry-hearted deaconess began to look in upon them they had four comfortable rooms in a respectable neighborhood, the man came home sober at night, the wife and children had happy faces, and they had a clean and decent home.

Now, of course, the deaconess did not do that alone. It was the loving spirit of Christ that, through her, got into those hearts and produced the transformation. But how much do you think she would have done if she had

gone into that house with a glum face and with solemn and awful sanctity had undertaken her mission. She would only have added to the sorrow of the situation. It was her merry heart, glad of God's love, glad that Christ was seeking after the lost, glad that the sinning soul can be saved, glad that there is hope for the very worst—all this that made her coming like a little bit of heaven sprinkled down into the darkened home.

We can not have a merry heart if we allow sin to make its home there. Any known sin will separate us from God so that we can not have peace, and it will be impossible for our hearts to be merry. To allow sin to make its home in the heart is like permitting a man-eating tiger to settle down in a jungle near a village, as often occurs in the East. What is everybody's business is nobody's business, and so the whole village waits for somebody to come along and kill the tiger. In the meantime the tiger picks up a feeble old man here and a frail old woman there, a boy and a girl now and then, and sometimes destroys scores of people before it is slain. It gets bolder all the while, and, having once tasted human flesh, will not willingly eat anything else. So

sin, left to make its den in the heart, will fatten on the most precious things in a man's life. No man can tell what his sin will do for him. Only one thing is certain—it will only do him harm, and unless cast out and destroyed, the end is death.

I once saw an Eastern city startled by the murder of a distinguished man in the world of literature, slain by his own brother, who, in turn, became a suicide. It is quite possible that at the time of the murderer's terrible deed he may have been insane; but there was no doubt what caused his insanity. For years there had been a feud, bitter and hard, between the two brothers, and the man who put an end to their two lives had hated his brother as Cain hated Abel. Anger and enmity and jealousy nestled together in his soul. His brother had more money, had more friends, was more famous than himself. He looked on, envious and jealous, and hated him because of it. It was the old story of Cain and Abel over again. I suppose he never dreamed of killing him at first, any more than Cain intended to kill Abel when he first began to hate him. But he just went on hating him, and hate fattened and grew

strong and savage as the years went by. His hate intensified all evil passions. Not only did it intensify the evil, but all the good in him that held him back from doing evil grew weaker day after day. He never once pictured himself a murderer and then a suicide. No, not in his worst nightmare, when he had a bad dream and started up in bed crying out for very horror; he had never dreamed of anything as bad as that. But hate, the man-eating tiger, made his den in his soul. And when his chance came he took his brother's life, and then his own, and hurled their two souls naked into the presence of Almighty God.

Do you think he had a merry heart during those years, with that tiger of hate in his soul? No, indeed. Anger, envy, jealousy, any of these, can drive all true merriment out of the heart.

The merry heart depends on the quality of the soul and not on the quantity of the man's possessions. Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The same is true of the merry heart. There are people who are poor, very poor, in this world's goods, who

rejoice every day in a merry heart. And there are people very rich in the world's wealth who have no peace or joy or cheerfulness. A few years since the richest woman in the world, now getting to be an old woman, went to the superintendent of police and secured a permit to carry a revolver, because she thought people were trying to put her out of the way in order to get her money. Does anybody imagine that that woman, with many millions, has anything like the happiness of any one of tens of thousands of women in humble circumstances who are expending their energy to give blessing and comfort to those whom they love? You can not buy a merry heart. A million dollars will not buy it. A hundred millions of gold would not buy a merry heart for a single hour.

But while you can not buy a merry heart, you may have it without money and without price. Christ never comes into a human heart and takes up His abode there, holding a feast there day after day, sitting at the head of the table, casting out all evil shadows, without making that heart merry. Whenever you see a Christian without the merry heart, then

you may know that he is not living up to his privileges. For it is the Christian's privilege to go with a merry heart up to the very gates of death, where Christ, who gives the merry heart, has promised to meet him, and receive him unto Himself. Do I speak to any whose hearts are heavy? Do I speak to any whose hearts are grief-stricken and discouraged? Do I speak to any broken-hearted? Christ is able to take the broken heart into His hands and mend it. I have seen Jesus come to a heart that was all frozen and full of winter, and bring springtime to that soul. He can do that for you. Will you exchange your weary, discouraged heart for a heart merry and glad? Christ is the only physician who can bring about that glorious transformation.

GOD, NOT LUCK, MAN'S SURE FORTRESS

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”—Prov. 18:10.

“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”—Eccles. 9:11, 12.

THIS second text reminds me of the very first words of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.”

And so, on and on, over all that chaos that grew into day and night, into dry land and ocean, into green grass and fruitful trees, and forests filled with animals, and waters teeming with fish, and air filled with birds, a world governed at last by human intelligence, into which everything fitted into its place—back of it all, over it all, brooded God, directing, fashioning, inspiring, controlling.

God has not deserted His world. Doctor Brierly recently declared that ours is a haunted race, and that the unknown is the greatest part of us. The Unseen Partner works by innumerable occult agencies. We are the playground of all manner of mysterious forces, which act on us, and through us, we know not how. The more developed our nature, the more sensitive do we become to this divine influence. The great artists and the great poets feel it. The creators in literature and art are always ready to admit that the conscious "I" which they call themselves has only a subordinate part in their productions. The men who are voices and not mere echoes are the most distinctly conscious that, in their turn, they are an echo, and that of a world vaster than their own.

It is, however, Brierly declares, when we come to the uppermost sphere of man's nature that we become most distinctly conscious of the Unseen Partner. Here "the something else" that is continually adding itself to our nature is too perceptible in its operations to escape the notice of any but the wilfully blind. One might speak of a series of concentric circles of world forces, each beating upon humanity, and each in succession deeper and more central than the last. Behind our atmosphere is a subtle ether; behind the heat and light that, streaming perpetually on our planet from the sun, bring with them all the potencies of our physical life; behind the magnetic currents that, penetrating the rocks and sweeping from pole to pole, thrill our nerve-systems as they pass, there are, we begin to recognize, streaming also upon us, psychic and spiritual influences that cease not to mold the race for its future destiny.

"One watches with awestruck interest the play of these higher energies. They vary constantly in their mode of approach. Sometimes it is as great formative ideas which possess the race. More constantly it is not so much an idea as a vast aspiration for the

next depth. And this deep desire is the tool that is already shaping in us the organ for its expression. The first thing in the making of an eye is the desire to see. But the tools are always at work. Have we thought what is involved in the chiseling of a fine spiritual face, where purity and a high soul look out of every feature? When we see a picture on the canvas we are sure it didn't grow there. An artist has painted it. And the lines of noble countenance are not less certainly artist's work. Moreover, the artist, as is the way always in genuine work, has revealed himself in the picture. In the qualities of the noblest souls we see reflections, dim, yet sure, of the Unseen Partner's character.

“It is to the degree in which men realize the Unseen Partner that the greatness or littleness of their life consists. Inspiration in men is the unrestricted play of this ‘otherness’ upon them. In the Christian Incarnation we have the principle carried to its fullest expression. When Christ, speaking out of the fulness of His inner sense, declared that He and the Father were one, He meant this. One of the great Christian fathers has expressed the fact in words which later writers

would have done well to note. Says he: 'The human spirit of Jesus so perfectly appropriated the divine as to become one with it, so that Christ's thinking and willing were truly the thinking and willing God in Him, tho His human nature was thereby in no way annulled.' "

And if we go back to this old Book of Ecclesiastes, and listen to this ancient preacher who had a curious eye for everything under the sun, we shall find the same consciousness that back of all the intelligence and skill and power of man there was a ruling power far greater and more significant, which guided in the affairs of mankind. How clearly he points out the great truth. He assures us that one would naturally suppose that the lightest foot could in running win the prize; and yet the race is not always won by the swift. Something intervenes to retard the swift runner, or he is over sure of success and so delays until the slower gets the start and carries off the prize.

The natural, intelligent judgment would be that, in fighting, the army that was the most numerous and best equipped and the most skilfully led would always win the battle. But

the wise man has found that the battle is not always to the strong, and there are many illustrations of it. David slew Goliath with a smooth stone from a shepherd's sling, and in one way and another that battle in the valley of Elah has been repeated over and over again in all parts of the world. The battle is not always to the strong.

We would naturally suppose that men of sense and wisdom would always be men of riches, and that those who know how to live in the world to the best advantage would be the ones who owned the great abundance of worldly goods. And yet a great many of the wisest and brainiest men of the world have had the smallest amount of this world's goods. The world's richest men have been by no means its wisest men.

It is a natural conclusion that men of shrewdness and skill, who know how to do things better than others, would obtain the smiles and favor of the great, and yet it has often occurred that the most skilful and shrewd men the world has ever seen have been disgraced and overthrown through their own cunning.

Why is all this? The writer of our text

says it is because neither the swift man, nor the strong man, nor the wise man, nor the skilful man is sure of a chance without interference to work his will. "Time and chance happeneth to them all." They are likely to be caught in a snare as fishes and birds are caught. The shrewdest man is likely to be caught in a trap baited with his own cunning. That is to say, as in the beginning above chaos was God, so now about what seems the chaos of human life, the struggle, the riot of mankind—above all this is God. This is the only explanation of history, and this is the hope of the race. It is not a gambler's world. It is not a world of chance; neither is it a world of the survival of brute force, or cunning, where the weak must go to the wall. No. Luck has another name, and that other name is God.

In one of the greatest works of fiction ever created by the mind of man, "*Les Misérables*," Victor Hugo paints a marvelous picture of the battle of Waterloo. After speaking of the many incidents that worked into it to bring about the defeat of the great Napoleon, who had marched up and down Europe, boasting of his lucky star, and be-

lieving that in his own brilliant military brain that star had its origin, Hugo asks the question: "Was it possible for Napoleon to win the battle?" And he answers it in the negative. Why? On account of Wellington? No. On account of Blücher? No. And then, with marvelous sublimity of spirit, he answers, "On account of God." Hugo declares that Bonaparte, victor at Waterloo, did not harmonize with the law of the nineteenth century. Another series of facts was preparing, in which Napoleon had no longer a place. It was time for this vast man to fall; his excessive weight in human destiny disturbed the balance. Says Hugo: "Streaming blood, overcrowded graveyards, mothers in tears, are formidable pleaders. When the earth is suffering from an excessive burden, there are mysterious groans from the shadow, which the abyss hears. Napoleon had been denounced in infinitude, and his fall was decided. Waterloo is not a battle, but a transformation of the universe." Napoleon was caught in a net like a common man, as fishes and birds are caught, because there was something greater in the universe than Napoleon, and God put a stop to his career.

Men break the laws of God ruthlessly and go on trusting in their own strength, and in their own cunning, and because they are not at once brought to a halt and called to judgment they begin to dream that they are lucky; but they make the great mistake of forgetting that, while God does not always pay at the end of the week, at last He pays.

The second phase of our theme, which is so strongly put forth in our first text, is that in every time of trial an honest-hearted man or woman may find a sure refuge, a certain fortress, through trust in God. And if we do trust God and avail ourselves of His help, the struggles and trials of life become a great blessing to us.

Take the case of Joseph. Who can doubt for a moment that if Joseph had been taken from his dreams, a careless, boasting lad among his native hills, and made prime minister of Egypt, he would have been a miserable failure. But suddenly, from that happy experience of boyish pride, where he sunned himself in his father's love, he is thrust down into the darkness of humiliation. He is sold as a slave into a foreign land. He is driven by his own sorrows and the utter helplessness

ness of his situation to prayer and to communion with God. As a slave, and afterward for years as a prisoner, he learns the great lessons of humility, and obedience, and patience, and comes to know God, and fear Him, which is the beginning of wisdom. It was from the deep valley full of shadows that Joseph emerged into the great and splendid success of his life.

The life of Moses tells the same story. He is enjoying favor and fame as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; then he is cast down into dark depths of trouble and flies in exile from his native land, where for forty years he is a humble sheep-herder in the desert. But in that desert solitude he learned lessons that he never could have learned in the court of Egypt. There he found God and communed with Him. He not only became strong of limb, but he became muscular of brain, and his moral fiber knitted itself into power. The Moses that came out of the wilderness and the desert at the call of God to liberate a nation of slaves is a very different Moses from the impulsive youth that had fled away into exile forty years before. Forty years of trial had made a man of him, and now he

was ready to come forth and give a good account of himself. But do not for a moment imagine that these were exceptions. You will find the same story in the life of General Grant, or Abraham Lincoln, or any of a hundred illustrious names I might mention in our own land. It was in trial and hardship, and sometimes in shame and disgrace, that they wrestled with their enemies, snatched victory from defeat, and gathered a strength and force of character that fitted them to stand in the sunlight worthy to be crowned.

There went home to heaven a few years ago that great Christian artist, Sidney Cooper. He was in his ninety-ninth year when God called him. His life is one long romantic story of hills and valleys. But God was his God as truly when he was in the valleys as when he was on the hills. After he had grown to be an old man, he said one day to a friend: "Yes, the Bible is my recreation. And when one really knows the happiness to be found in the living Word, it is the sweetest recreation for those in declining years that the soul could possibly desire. The Bible and its truth form my life day by day. Here am I, an old man, aged

and decrepit, if you like, but for years I can look back and say, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.' "

On one occasion another great painter, Sir Edwin Landseer, was in sore trouble, and went to his friend Henry Graves to chat the matter over with him. But the efforts of Graves to give comforting advice to the artist were unsuccessful. "Don't think me unkind, Graves," said Sir Edwin, "but I am none the happier for this long chat with you. I think I will go and have a talk with Cooper." So to Sidney Cooper the great animal-painter went. Landseer stated his case. "We sha'n't be disturbed," said Cooper, "and I think I can put you in the way of getting the very advice and help you want." Cooper placed his hand on Landseer's shoulder. Landseer, who was not of a particularly religious turn of mind, nevertheless involuntarily did what that touch of the hand seemed to suggest. Together these two great artists knelt down in prayer and remained on their knees for some time. And when they got up, Landseer held out his hand to Cooper and said: "Cooper, you have put me in the way of getting, yes, and obtaining the very

comfort that I stood so much in need of. God bless you!"

I am sure I am speaking to many young men who would like to grow old as Sidney Cooper did—noble and strong and happy. My friend, if you want to be that kind of an old man, it is time to begin now. Give your heart to Christ and walk with Him and your life shall grow in strength and power, and at last shall realize the promise of the Psalmist that the righteous shall be fat and flourishing in old age, and bear fruit as long as they live. For them the valley of the shadow of death shall be but the entrance to the gate, opening on the way that leads upward to the shining hilltops of heaven and immortality.

THE TRAGEDIES AND TRIUMPHS OF THE TONGUE

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”
—Prov. 18: 21.

FEW people understand the power of words for good or ill. Max Müller said, “The word is the thought incarnate.” And Mirabeau said, “Words are things.” Both were right, as was Hawthorne when he declared that nothing is more unaccountable than the spell that often lurks in a spoken word. A kind word has given courage to more than one despondent heart; and, struck by a cruel word, more than one gentle spirit has sobbed itself into the grave. Each word has a meaning, and the word is that meaning sent home to another—a word alive with fear, or joy, or love, or hate.

This wise observer, who gives us our text, declares that death is in the tongue. I think it will be interesting and helpful if for a few moments we study the kinds of words in which death lurks. And I think that forever

the list must be headed by *careless words*. My observation is that the great tragedies which come from the tongue come less frequently from deliberate malice than from carelessness and recklessness of speech. The tongue is a dangerous steed to which to give the rein. The Scriptures tell us that we need to keep a guard over our lips, and our tongue should be kept under careful discipline. A wild untrained horse needs a strong bit to restrain its fright or its fury. Its own safety as well as that of its rider depends upon the strength of the bridle, and the arm by which it is held in check. So your tongue and mine need to be held in by bit and bridle that they do no hurt. Nothing is more irresponsible than a runaway horse. If its terror or its fury be not checked with a strong hand, it rushes to disaster without any regard to ditches or precipices, or dangerous holes, and exposes itself and its rider to danger and death. A runaway tongue is like that. It commits its owner to words which the mind and heart, if properly on the throne and at rest, would never have dreamed of being responsible for. Beware of the careless word!

There used to be a sign near the Hackensack River in New Jersey, on the New York & Erie Railroad, which in large, boldly painted letters said, "Shut your ash-pan." A traveler coming on that sign suddenly as he glanced through the window was likely to wonder what that impertinent counsel could mean, but in a moment after seeing the sign the train would dash out on to a long wooden bridge, and then the traveler would understand the meaning and the propriety of that sign-board suggestion. Burning coals dropping from the open ash-pan of the locomotive might destroy the bridge, interrupt travel, imperil life, and cause many embarrassments in a financial way. So it was very important that the faithful engineer heed the sign-board, "Shut your ash-pan." A sign like that needs to be held up again and again before many men and women. For it is not wooden bridges only that are being endangered by fire. A careless tongue is a fire that may set a soul on fire with hell, and may destroy a life and a career of infinitely more value than a thousand railway bridges. O my friend, you who are tempted to careless recklessness of speech, there is no mes-

sage in the world so necessary for you to hear as that which is indicated in the sign-board, "Shut your ash-pan."

There is one thing that should always give us pause when tempted to carelessness and recklessness of speech, and that is the fact that we can never get the words back again. A word unspoken does not exist; but a word spoken can never cease to be. Will Carleton describes it well when he says:

Boys, flying kites, haul in their white-winged birds,
But you can't do that when you're flying words.
Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes drop back dead,
But God himself can't kill them when they're said.

Another place where the tongue has its tragedies, which are often the most terrible tragedies in the world, is where it speaks *slanderous words*. The Bible compares slander to a poison. The deadliest poisons are those for which no test is known; there are poisons so destructive that a single drop insinuated into the veins produces death in a few seconds, and yet no chemical science can separate that virus from the contaminated blood, and show the metallic particles of poison glittering palpably, and say, "There

it is!" In the drop of venom which distils from the sting of the small insect, or the spikes of the nettle-leaf, there is concentrated the quintessence of a poison so subtle that the microscope can not distinguish it, and yet so virulent that it can inflame the blood, irritate the whole constitution, and convert day and night into restless misery. In St. James' day, he tells us in his epistle, there were idle men and idle women, who went about from house to house, dropping slander as they went; and yet you could not take up that slander and point out and prove the distinct falsehood that was there. You could not evaporate the truth in the slow process of the crucible, and then show the residuum of falsehood glittering and visible. You could not fasten upon any special word, and say, "that is a lie"; for, in order to constitute slander and poison a life and assassinate a character—or, rather, a reputation, for no man can assassinate my character but myself—it is not necessary that the word spoken should be false *in toto*. As Frederick Robertson well says, "half-truths are often far more slanderous than whole falsehoods." It is not necessary that the word should be

distinctly uttered; a dropt lip, an arched eyebrow, a shrugged shoulder, a significant look, an incredulous expression of countenance; nay, even an emphatic silence may do the work, and when the light and trifling thing which has done the mischief has fluttered off, the venom is left behind to work and rankle, to inflame hearts, to fever human existence, and to poison human society at the fountain springs of life.

There is nothing that we need to be more careful of than our conversation about another personality. It is so easy to be unjust, to misunderstand, or to be misunderstood. A careless utterance about a third person that is spoken without malice on our part may be misconstrued by the person to whom it is spoken, and after two or three translations may come to be a slander that begins to work outrage and riot. Let us be careful to restrain ourselves in our conversation about others. Quaint old Quarls, a wise philosopher of his day, used to say: "Give not thy tongue too great liberty lest it take thee prisoner." And the prisoner to an evil tongue is every now and then starting an evil going in the world that he has

no power to stop. Some one says, scandal, hydra-headed, poison-fanged, lives on the garbage of the world, and slays even after it is seemingly killed. A missionary tells the story of a cobra which somehow got into a church in India while the people were gathered for worship. Some one saw it, went quietly out, procured a sword and coming back, cut off the snake's head. After the service the people went to look at the animal, and a native touched the dead head with his bare foot. He drew it back with a cry of pain, and in an hour he was dead. The poisoned fangs had power to kill, tho their owner was dead. So there have been many men who have started false and wicked words going in the world, that went on poisoning the hearts and lives of multitudes of men and women even after they themselves had ceased to speak in any other manner on earth.

But there are triumphs as well as tragedies of the tongue. Solomon says there is life as well as death in the tongue. This is true of *encouraging words*. Blest are the people who go through the world speaking words of good cheer and encouragement to those who have lost heart and are ready to faint by the

way. There is a story that once in the Alps a huge eagle swooped down upon the cabin of a poor woman, and carried off her babe. The distracted mother saw the great bird make for his mountain nest with her child in its talons. The villagers saw the eagle alight upon the frowning cliffs that overlooked their village. The most venturesome of the poor woman's neighbors tried to climb the perilous heights, but were driven back by fear. One and another made the attempt, but were driven back by giddiness and terror. At last the mother, nerved by love, and strengthened by some unseen power from heaven, began to climb the mountain in quest of her darling. When almost in reach of the babe, her steps grew weak, and her strength began to fail, when a boy cried out to the villagers, "Cheer her, cheer her, cheer her." The cheer was what was needed to give her strength; she scaled the cliff and drove away the angry eagle from her child, and returned with him to her humble home. The world needs cheer. A friend's sympathy can nerve the arm and give new inspiration to the brain. There is life in such words.

Kind words are often like the bread cast

on the waters that come back again enriched and multiplied and full of blessing for the one who speaks them. Julian Legrand, the great Paris merchant, gives an event in his own life which illustrates this. The firm to which he belonged was in financial straits. They decided in the morning that it would take \$100,000 to tide them over. Legrand went out and sought a loan among his friends, but the times were so stringent no one would lend him a dollar. He returned to his office, dejected and despairing. While sitting there in a gloomy state of mind, there was a tap at the door. The man who entered came up and said: "I hear, Mr. Legrand, that you are in need of money." "Yes," replied the merchant, "we certainly are." "How much do you need?" he asked. "Not less than \$100,000." "Draw me your note," continued the stranger, "for that amount, without interest, for one year, and I will give you my check for it." Legrand looked at the man in astonishment, conscious that he had seen him before, but not able to identify him. "But, pray, why have you come to our relief?" "When I was a small boy," said the stranger, "attending the public school, you came as

one of the commissioners on examination day. I was poor and shabbily drest, and thought you would, of course, pay attention to the rich men's children, but expected no recognition for myself. I recited poorly, but after the exercises you put your hand on my head, spoke some kind words, told me to persevere, that I could do better if I would try, and assured me that the way to honor was open to all alike; all I had to do was to be resolute and push on. That, sir, was the turning-point in my life. From that hour my soul has aspired, and I have never reached a goal without blessing you in my heart. I have prospered and am wealthy. I now offer you but a poor return for the soul-wealth you gave me in that bygone time." Little did Mr. Legrand think when he was speaking to the poor boy in the school that he would reap such a fruitage from those kind words. And doubtless we will meet many such surprizes in heaven. What we thought were the greatest occasions on the earth, in God's estimation may be proved small and insignificant; what we thought was the trivial, may have been in His sight the most important.

Words spoken in the interest of truth always have life in them. The father of Senator Dolliver was a Methodist preacher. Many years ago he was riding a circuit in West Virginia. One Sunday, riding to a country schoolhouse, where he was to preach, he overtook on the road a tall, awkward young man carrying a string of fish which he had just caught. Instead of scolding him for going fishing on Sunday, the circuit-rider rode beside him, and entered into a friendly conversation with him. By degrees he drew the young man out to talk about himself and about his future, and what plans he was making for it. At last the conversation became so friendly, and the young man was so thoroughly interested, that it became a very natural thing for him to advise the young fellow to give his heart to God, become a Christian, go to school, and get an education.

These faithful words were spoken in the nick of time. The young man had reached the cross-roads where he was making a decision as to what he would do with himself, and the result was that he became a Christian, went to school, became a cultivated man and a faithful minister, known afterward

as the Rev. T. B. Hughes, the father of Bishop E. H. Hughes and his no less distinguished brother, Dr. Matt. S. Hughes.

Never fail to speak a word for any truth that God has given you. Faithful words of testimony to the power of Christ to save are the great agency by which the world is to be won to Jesus. On one occasion in London a young man of good family was convicted of a serious crime. After the trial a policeman spoke a word of sympathy to him and said, "If you would trust my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, He would make a man of you." The young fellow replied with a sneer, "Will your God do my fifteen years for me?" And no more passed. Years afterward, in another part of London, a distinguished-looking gentleman came up to the same police officer, who was now an inspector, and recalled the circumstance to him, saying, "Do you remember me?" "I should not have known you, sir," replied the inspector, "but you must be the same man, for only God and myself and that man knew of those words being uttered." The gentleman then told how, three years after his conviction, in his prison cell, these words had

come back to him; how he had followed their advice, and after his discharge, at the end of a shortened sentence, he had gone to the colonies, prospered, and was now doing all he could to bring others to the Savior, who had "made a man of him." Never fail to speak your word for the truth which God has made to live in your own soul!

THE NOBLEST FRIENDSHIP IN THE WORLD

“There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”
—Prov. 18: 24.

EMERSON says that true friendship demands a religious treatment. And sure it is that the noblest ideal of friendship is only realized in a loving communion between Jesus Christ and our souls. This is true, first of all, because our friendship with Christ never turns upon trifling conditions. It does not hinge upon our youth or our cast of features or contour of form, but upon the inner quality of the soul. The friendship of Christ can not be won because of any other gifts that may be ours. In our inner souls we must be lovable if we are to have His friendship.

St. John in one of his epistles tells about a man named Gaius who seems to have had a very lovable character. Now Gaius was handicapped in some ways. He was not able to go forth as one of the great and active messengers of Christ. He was in feeble

health. Just the character of his sickness we do not know. He may have been a cripple who could hobble around on crutches, or he may have been confined to his room or his bed. Certain it is that whenever his friends thought of him, the first thing they thought about was his health; that is, the first thing after the love words that sprang to their lips at the mention of his name. And so John, in beginning this letter to Gaius, addresses it, "Unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." When John thought what a beautiful, charming man Gaius was, and in imagination looked again into those wells of sincerity and truth in Gaius' eyes, and breathed the heavenly atmosphere which always went forth from the conversation of that good man, a great longing came on him that Gaius might have a body equal to his soul. And so he tells Gaius that he is praying that his body may prosper as well as his soul does.

This story suggests to us the first great secret of a friendship that will endure. It must be built up upon loveliness of character.

All outward beauty is a very transient and transitory thing. Everything that comes from the strength of the body, from the beauty of form or of features, or from the environment of wealth and luxury is accidental and evanescent. There have been men and women who have had all of these in the largest degree who failed in the end of being loved. The real secret of loveliness lies beneath all that. It lies in the character, in the personality of the man or woman. God made us to love and be loved. It is possible for every good man and every good woman to have the charm and loveliness which will bring the sweetest gift that can come to any human heart. There is a beauty of the soul which is infinitely more real than beauty of the body. There is a beauty of the spirit that can never die and which will always attract love. Harold Johnson has given us a very beautiful poem, finding his theme in the never-fading beauty of the spirit. He sings:

Beauty is forever young,
While there speaks a poet's tongue.
Beauty never fades or dies
To the artist's seeing eyes.

While the sun shall rise and set,
While the moon and stars shine yet
Tranquil in the sky,
Beauty can not die.

Love-lit is the heart of God,
Beauty riseth from the sod,
By the orange groves and palms.
In the storms and in the calms,
In the sorrow round us spread,
In the joy that breaks ahead,
Sing it low and high,
Beauty can not die.

Wedding robe and funeral bier,
What sweet mystery is here?
Birth of every little child,
Anguish of a mother wild,
Lilt of song-birds in the air,
Burst of joy and fold of care,
Ever love is nigh,
Beauty can not die.

Comfort ye, oh, comfort ye,
Man and woman where they be.
While this spacious earth shall stand,
And the harvest bless the land,
While both cold and heat hold sway,
And the night succeeds the day,
This from God say I,
Beauty can not die.

There ought to be great encouragement in this phase of our theme if we are handicapped or limited in our operations by illness, or by duties that chain us down to a very narrow sphere. Instead of grumbling or fretting at the limited sphere in which we are placed, we should seek through fellowship with God to have a character, a personality, so beautiful and lovely that it will attract to us the love and appreciation that will both sweeten and enlarge our lives. Dr. Fletcher tells the very interesting story of a young woman who lived in a factory town where there was at one time a good deal of talk about cases of healing by certain irresponsible people. Now, this young woman, twenty-five years of age, was a noble, educated, cultivated woman, but she had carried from her birth a terrible sorrow in birth-marks that covered one-half her face, so that they could not possibly escape the attention of any one; the glance of every passer-by on the street went to her heart like an arrow. When these people began talking about their so-called "faith-healing," she went to her Sunday-school teacher, and asked if she ought to seek to have her blemish taken away.

“Do you think,” said Alice, with trembling lips and brimming eye, “do you think that God would heal me of my affliction?”

“My dear girl,” replied her teacher, as she flung her arms about the now heavily-sobbing girl, “you certainly know that my heart has always gone out in sympathy for you, and never more so than at this moment. Your pitiful question is a perfectly natural and legitimate one, but its answer is beyond my reach. I dare not say ‘yes’; nor dare I say ‘no.’ I can only say that I think it would be proper for you to ask Him, conditionally, if it be His will; but I know that it will be perfectly right and safe for you to ask Him also, unconditionally, to make you all beautiful within and radiant with an exquisite Christly character.”

With thanks the somewhat comforted sufferer departed, and betook herself to prayer. “O my Father,” implored her agonizing soul, “if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And if this, my outer blemish, may not pass away, for the sake of Christ, my Redeemer, I entreat that in any case my inner character and outer life may be made beau-

tiful like His." As she ceased there came the answer to her inner consciousness, sweet and steady, as surely as it came to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

And so it proved. For it was not long before all that community was silently made aware of the wonderful and delightful change which had come over her spirit. Outwardly she appeared the same, and yet not the same. An inner light and a supernal love transfigured her. It was the most mysterious and fascinating of miracles. Utter mindfulness of Christ and others had annihilated consciousness of self. So unfeigned was her interest in the welfare of all that their eyes, as well as hers, were hidden from her former wo. This loveliness of character drew to her side the grandest man in all that community, who, for the loveliness of her soul, the charm and glory of her spirit, overlooked the lack of beauty of features.

An added reason why the friendship we have with Jesus Christ is the noblest friendship in the world is because the element of selfishness is entirely eliminated from it. Christ infused into the Christian Gospel, and into Christian life, an element of marvelous

beauty and power, when He declared so solemnly that any service which we did for our fellow men, the humblest and poorest of them, in His name, and for the love of Him, He would regard it and treasure it up in memory with the same thankfulness and appreciation as tho it had been done for Him personally. A young man in an Eastern city had been reading that wonderful chapter in Matthew's Gospel which tells about the Judgment, when these things that have been done lovingly for fellow men are rewarded by the Lord, and he went away from the reading of it hungry in his heart for a chance to do something to minister to Jesus Christ. "Ah," he said to himself, "if I could only have a chance to give Him a drink when He is hot and thirsty; to carry a load or a burden for Him that would rest His shoulders, how happy I would be." While he was saying this he was walking along the street, and he saw a poor old rag-woman, a most hopeless-looking creature, with a basket loaded too heavy for her. The poor old soul was having a hard time of it. She puffed and panted a few steps, and then she would have to put it down and rest a bit before she could go

on. Like a flash there came over the young man that here was a chance to do something for Jesus Christ. With all the gentleness and consideration he would have shown the most refined and elegantly gowned woman of his acquaintance, he went to her and said: "Let me carry it for you up the hill." The old woman looked at him in astonishment. There was also mingled in it a little fear that he might be meaning to steal her rags. But a look in his face assured her, and full of wonder she trotted along after, as the big strong fellow lifted the basket on his shoulder and walked up the street. When they reached the cellar to which the old woman was journeying, the tears were in her eyes as she mumbled out: "God bless you, sir." But to her greater astonishment, the young man grasped her hand, and said: "Oh, mother, you have done me a great service this morning." "Why, what have I done for you?" she answered. "You have helped me to give a cup of cold water to my tired Lord." And he went away leaving her more mystified than ever.

Our friendship for Jesus Christ lifts us up into the atmosphere of His mind and heart

and impart to us His faith in humanity. And it is this faith in humanity which has been the secret on the human side of every great movement to save men and women. You may see a very remarkable illustration of this in the case of Mrs. Ballington Booth in her mission to the prisoners in the penitentiaries and jails of the land. Some years ago, when Mrs. Booth began her beautiful work in behalf of the prisoners, she found the hardest part of her labor, and by far the most discouraging, was to get honest employment for released convicts. Nobody wanted such men around. But the courageous and loving woman persevered, and now she bears witness that offers of positions for ex-prisoners come to her in greater numbers than she can fill. There is a great truth illustrated by this fact. It is safe to have faith in men. Mrs. Booth believed in the hidden kindness of employers, and in the hidden trustworthiness of prisoners, if only they could be won to Christ. She went from one jail to another, and from one penitentiary to another, preaching to them the gospel of hope, and forgiveness, and divine help in Jesus Christ, and it had the same effect in penitentiaries

as anywhere else. Men heard it and fell on their knees before God, and were forgiven. All over the land, under the wonderful leadership of this messenger of God, there are penitentiaries in which are scores of men who are devout Christians. When these men come out, honest employment is waiting for them, because employers of labor have learned that the Christianity of these men holds out, and that the real manhood in them is strengthened, and redeemed and bulwarked by Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest writers of the last century has told of a forsaken wife, dying poor, heartbroken, lonely and unloved. She had no one with her but her little son, whom she had taught to pray. When the end came very close, there fell a strange clearness upon her soul, which calmed every fear, and hushed the voice of every passion, and she lay for a while as if entranced. Then she spoke to the child and charged him all his life to say every morning and every night the prayer and hymn he had just been saying. Said the dying mother: "They are all I have to leave you; but if you only believe them, you will never be without comfort, no matter what-

ever happens to you." The hymn was this:

One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end.

Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?
But this Savior died to have us
Reconciled in Him to God.

When He lived on earth abased,
Friend of Sinners was His name;
Now, above all glory raised,
He rejoiceth in the same.

Oh, for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above.

THE MOCKERY OF WINE

“Wine is a mocker.”—Prov. 20:1.

THE world holds no more despicable character than the mocker. To deceive and allure from the path of innocence and right, bringing destruction on a helpless victim, and then to gloat over him and mock at him seems horrible to us. The artists of the centuries have painted no other such representation of horror as when they have pictured the fiend of the infernal regions as a mocker. The darkest picture in that black day of agony when Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns was when the cruel soldiers mocked His pain. Yet Solomon, the wisest man of the ages, from a broad observation and a lifelong experience at the head of a great nation, declares it to be his deliberate conviction that “Wine is a mocker.”

The mockery of wine has not ceased. It has not changed its character. Every city and large town in the land furnishes enough

illustrations every week for a dozen fresh sermons illustrating the mockery of wine. From the saloon to the mansion, from the poor tramp to the rich and educated leader in society, a week does not pass that we may not look into the leering face of the wine devil as he gloats over his victim and mocks at his misery.

A while ago I kept tab on one of our American cities just one week—every incident I shall give you to-night was recorded in the press of that city in that one week.

Let us begin at the bottom, and that will be in the saloon. There is no lower level on earth than that. When you are there, there is only a thin trap-door between you and hell. One night a young man entered one of the city saloons and spent the evening. He was welcomed as a hail-fellow, well-met. He had money. He not only spent the evening, but he spent his money, and when his money was gone, and he was stupid with liquor, he leaned his elbow on the table and went to sleep. After a while, the saloon-keeper came and shook him roughly, but the goods he had bought made him hard to awake.

“Get up! I don’t want you to sleep here,”

yelled the saloon-keeper, continuing to shake the man. Finally, angered that the poor drunkard did not waken, he suddenly jerked the chair from beneath him, and the head of the sleeping man struck the floor with a bang.

The shock aroused him. He jumped to his feet with one hand to his head, and rubbing his eyes with the other.

“What did you do that for?”

The saloon-keeper's reply was a curse. Out went the arm of the half-drunken, angered man, and he seized a heavy beer-glass and hurled it against the saloon-keeper's head, who fell like a dead man. He died from the wound.

How the wine devil mocked that young man. He went to that liquor saloon to have a good time. He had a little money in his pocket, and so he said: “I will go to the saloon and meet jolly fellows. I will have the drink. It will send the blood quick through my veins. Dull care will vanish, and I will have a pleasant evening.” Alas! how the wine devil mocked him. He spent his money; he had his drink. He found a heavy drunken stupor in which there was no joy, no delight. He got a half-broken head, and then partly

drunken, not clearly knowing what he was doing, he got a murder on his hands, and the electric-chair or long years in the penitentiary, with a disgraced and dishonored name, was the result. The wine devil promised him a good time, and this is what he gave. Was there ever a mockery more cruel than that?

Here is another case. This, too, was a young man, a bright, genial, musical youth, counted a good fellow, who sang in the choir, and when he had his head was a gentleman. But he liked his glass once in a while. He was not a drunkard, he never thought of such a thing. If you had taken him to one side and said to him: "Young man, you are in danger of becoming a drunkard or coming to serious hurt through strong drink," he would have been insulted and indignant. But one evening he went to a club dance. He got in with some jolly young friends and had a few drinks. The wine went to his head, and under the influence of the drink, he went to a lady whom he had never met and asked her to dance with him. When she declined, his manner was offensive and insulting. Hot with the evil fire in his veins, he grabbed her by the arm and tried to drag her on to the

floor. Her husband, angered, struck him a terrible blow, and he staggered home to die before morning. It was the wine that put the insulting fever in his blood. If he had been sober, he would have been polite and gentlemanly; but the strong drink went raging through his veins; it put a fool in command of his brain, who drove him recklessly to his death. How the wine devil mocked him! He no doubt thought the evening would be a good deal more sociable and jolly if his wits were quickened and his tongue made nimble with the wine. So the tempter promised; but see the fulfilment. Verily, for him, wine was a mocker.

Change the scene. It is a fashionable restaurant down-town, and it is dinner-time. Among the guests are a well-drest man and his wife. There is some misunderstanding about the bill. Perhaps the wine adds to the confusion. At any rate, in the squabble between the proprietor of the restaurant and the couple, one hundred and ten wine-glasses are broken and the man and his wife are arrested and sent to jail. What a mockery the wine devil made of that couple. They went out to have dinner and a pleasant eve-

ning. A bottle of wine, they thought, would add to the joy of the occasion. The husband was a little tired and needed something to tone him up. The wife was nervous and needed something to steady her nerves. So the wine flowed freely. They would have a fine dinner and go home all made new again. That was the promise. The result was shame and disgrace and a cell in the Tombs. How the wine devil leered through the iron grating at them and mocked them in their shame and misery.

The wine devil has no mercy and no sympathy. He respects neither age nor sex. The night clerk of a lodging-house was arraigned in the police court charged with having caused injuries from which an old man, seventy-six years of age, was dying in the hospital. It seemed that the man was a working man, and was ejected from the lodging-house, according to the statement of the night clerk and some of the lodgers. He was picked up by a policeman, who, finding him intoxicated, but not noticing any signs of injury, locked him up. The next morning it was found that he had a rib broken, and was suffering from contusions and shock. The clerk's excuse was

that the old man was noisily drunk, and that he had put him out of the place.

Think of the mockery of the wine devil toward that old man. No doubt he began long ago as an occasional drinker. He never dreamed of becoming a drunkard. He was one of those men who could drink when he pleased, and let it alone when he wished. I can hear him saying now: "I am all right. I have will-power enough to take care of myself. If ever I find it is getting too strong for me, then will be time enough for me to quit." But that was the very day he could not quit. For years and years he only drank now and then. After a while, he got to be what was called a moderate steady drinker. Then age was coming on, and his system, as his vitality was dying down, thirsted for the fictitious strength promised by strong drink. Little by little it got its grip on him. The day passed when he was his own master. The wine devil was in the saddle and held the reins, and he was only the poor beast of burden that traveled whatever road the wine devil chose. A midnight pavement, with a crushed rib and a broken head, to be picked up by a policeman and thrust into a cell, and

to die in the hospital, is where the wine devil drove him.

Oh, the mockery of wine! And yet there are young men to-day who are getting ready for the last devil's ride to hell. You smile at me as I say it. When you go out from this house this evening you will sneer at my warning. You will drink your glass of beer or your glass of wine to-morrow, and possibly you will chink your glasses together in mocking memory of my words, and you will say, with reckless pleasantry: "Here's to the preacher's warning. Who's afraid?" You are not afraid. And there is your danger. The devil is mocking at you. You are just learning to like the taste of it. You are young, and strong, and vital, and if you would, you could trample it under your feet, and go on without it, and be master over it. A sober manhood and an honorable career is possible for you now; but if you refuse to heed the warning, and go on as you are going to-day, cultivating this growing taste for strong drink, it takes no prophet to read what the outcome will be for you. I can see you now. Your face is older than it is as I look at it to-night. The hair has a touch of gray

in it. Your cheeks are bloated. Your eyes are watery and bleary. Your coat is ragged and seedy. Yes, I see you. There you come staggering and drunken, with angry hands holding your arms, and I catch my breath as I see your clutching fingers that have seized hold of the casement of that cheap lodging-house door suddenly wrenched away, and your poor, old, battered, diseased hulk of a body flung out on to the pavement. Young man, that is your picture if you do not stop! And when that day comes, the wine devil will leer into your face and mock you.

The wine devil has no respect for sex. He has no chivalry in regard to women. He debauches womanhood with the same mocking leer upon his face with which he ruins manhood.

That same week, from a Fifth Avenue mansion, a well-drest woman was taken in a carriage to the alcoholic wards of one of the city hospitals. Everything possible was done to conceal the identity of the young woman. The reply to all inquiries was: "Her removal to the hospital is merely a private affair. It wouldn't be of interest to anybody if any particulars regarding her were made pub-

lic." She was said to belong to an excellent family. Alas, there are many such! There seems to be no question that, in many circles, drinking among women is increasing. And there is no one on earth whom the wine devil mocks so terribly as he does a woman. Her delicate, sensitive, nervous organization is a prey that yields almost without a cry when once she is stricken with the claw of the dragon. As some huge panther or lithe mountain lion might leap from the branches of the tree where he has lurked, and strike to the earth a beautiful young fawn running by the side of its mother, and hunt with hot breath and hissing lips and sharp, dagger-like teeth for the tender throat, tearing open the quivering flesh and drinking its blood before it scarce has time to make a faint bleat of fear or utter a cry of wo, so have I seen the wine devil seize hold upon young womanhood, and in a few weeks or months transform her into a poor, wanton thing. I have never seen such agony as I have seen in the face of a good man telling me of the ruin of his wife and the utter mockery of all his home life that had come from the wine-glass. Oh, woman, shun the wine-glass as the very

incarnation of everything that is your foe! I know it fascinates when it is red and gives its color in the cup. Then a few drops of it will make laughter, and half a glass will stimulate wit, and a whole glass will make dancing feet. But hear me: The wise man spoke truly when he said, "Wine is a mocker. Strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

No race of men is exempt from the mockery of wine. It has often been said that the Jewish people have fewer drunkards than almost any other people. And I have heard men say that they were exempt from the dangers of strong drink. But on Sunday of that same week, a Hebrew citizen, who had been a rabbi at one time, committed suicide by taking carbolic acid because he could not get a drink of whisky. This was no low and vulgar man. He conducted a school. He officiated at many ceremonies among his people. On such occasions he was wont to accept in generous measure the hospitality of the families who were making merry in honor of the event. Little by little the wine-glass had come to be his master. He had come to the time when the thirst was so deadly that he

felt he could not live without strong drink. That Sunday evening he called one of his four children and said: "Here is money. Go out and get half a pint of whisky." The child came back and returned the money to her father, saying:

"Papa, I can't get a drop of whisky. The saloons are all shut up." "If you can't get whisky," he said, "I'll get something else." Then he picked up his hat and left the house. He was only out a little while, and upon returning, entered the front room, without saying a word to the family. After a little his wife smelled carbolic acid, and upon hurrying to the room, found him lying motionless. He was already dead. The empty bottle was by his side.

How the wine devil mocked that man. With everything to live for—wife and children and friends—he had tampered with the wine-glass for the sake of sociability and pleasure. But see the result! The beginning, a jolly, social hour; the end, the dead body of a suicide, a broken-hearted widow, four sorrowing, disgraced, and despairing children. This is the way the wine devil mocks men. No wonder Shakespeare says: "O thou invisible

spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil." And a wiser man than Shakespeare never uttered truer sentences than when he summed up the story of the wine-glass by saying: "Who hath wo? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

GOD'S CANDLE IN MAN'S SOUL

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.”—
Prov. 20:27.

ONE of David's psalms has a passage similar to this text, in which he tells the story of some of the great sorrows and trials through which he has passed. He tells of the deep darkness of the storm that was only illuminated by God's lightning; tells how God plucked him out of the darkness and not only lighted the sky with His lightnings, but lighted a candle in David's own heart, a candle of faith and hope and assurance, that dispelled the darkness about him.

In these similar passages are the sources of two or three discourses we might preach. There is the suggestion that God means that each of us shall give forth light in our sphere. There is a sense in which we are to add to the light and civilization in the world. When I was a boy and lived on a farm in the Northwestern frontier, we used to go to church in

an old log schoolhouse in the woods. Evening meetings in those days were always announced to begin "at early candle-light." There were not even oil-lamps in the old schoolhouse. It was long before the days of the reign of the Standard Oil. But we had light nevertheless. There was an unwritten rule in the neighborhood that each family attending the service should bring at least one candle. The first man who arrived lighted his candle and put it up in one of the wooden candlesticks, or set it on the window-sill, fastened at the base in a little tallow-drip, dripping the tallow hot and then steadying the candle in it before it cooled. So every man who came in lighted his candle, and as the congregation grew the light grew. If there was a small congregation, there was what might be called "a dim religious light," and if there was a large congregation, the place was illuminated by the light of many candles. Now it should be like that in the spiritual illumination which we give in the world. Every one of us should add our own light to the combined illumination of all other faithful souls.

There is another sense in which each of us

is a candle of the Lord and should shine forth in our influence and give our testimony for Him. Here comes in our individuality. Every man who is true to himself, and who surrenders himself to Christ, will not only add his light to the Christian influence in the community, but he will shine with a light and beauty peculiar to himself. Tho all of us who are true men and women are the candles of the Lord, the truth still remains that we are the Lord's individual candles, and He does not mean that we shall all shine in exactly the same way.

It is a high honor that God has given us, the privilege of being individually a light for Him in the midst of the world's darkness. Phillips Brooks, in one of his greatest sermons, which was preached on this theme, recalls the fact that in certain lands for certain holy ceremonies they prepare the candles with most anxious care. The very bees which distil the wax are sacred. They range in gardens planted with sweet flowers for their use alone. The wax is gathered by consecrated hands, the shaping of the candles is a holy task, performed in holy places to the sound of hymns and in the atmosphere of

prayers. All this is done because the candles are to burn in the most lofty ceremonies on most sacred days. With what care must the man or the woman be made whose spirit is to be the candle of the Lord. It is the spirit of our lives which God has kindled with Himself. The body is valuable only for the protection and the education which the soul gains by it, and the power by which our spirits may become the Lord's candles is obedience. Therefore, obedience to God must be the great privilege and desire of our lives, and this not a hard and forced obedience, but a ready, loving, spontaneous obedience like that which a happy, trusting child gives to an adored father or mother. We must give such obedience to God as the candle gives to the flame. At the touch of the fire the candle melts and feeds the flame with its own self. So we must give ourselves to feed the flames of love and hope and faith which testify to the goodness of God, and which light up the dark world to know and rejoice in the light of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But there is another sermon in the text which I wish very briefly to emphasize. The writer of our text suggests that what he

means to teach is that God lights a candle in our hearts to bear witness to Himself and to give testimony as to what is right and wrong to us. The verse reads: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts," which suggests that Solomon means by "the candle of the Lord" what Paul means by the word conscience. In his letter to the Romans, Paul says with reference to the heathen, "They show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Again Paul says: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness." And again he says in his letter to the Corinthians: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." Now in all these Paul meant the same thing, evidently, which Solomon meant when he said: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts." The function of a candle or a lamp is to give light; and the function of light is to reveal or bear witness to the reality of things. If I am searching in a dark room for something I think to be there, a lighted can-

dle will soon settle the question of its presence, and bear witness to the truth.

God lights this candle in every human breast. I have heard the story of an old Indian who once asked a white man to give him some tobacco to smoke in his pipe. The white man gave him a loose handful from his coat pocket. The next day the Indian came back and asked for the man. "For," said he, "I found a coin among the tobacco."

"Why didn't you keep it?" asked the man with whom he was talking.

"I've got a good man and a bad man here," said the Indian, pointing to his breast, "and the good man say, 'It is not yours; give it back to the owner'; the bad man say, 'Never mind; you got it, and it's your own now.' The good man say, 'No, no; you mustn't keep it.' So I don't know what to do, and I think to go to sleep, but the good man and the bad man kept talking all night and troubled me; and now I bring the money back I feel good." Like that old Indian, white men and women have a good man and a bad man within. The bad man is the temptation of the evil one, and the good man is the conscience set in every human

breast. They keep talking for and against, and our salvation depends upon the good man's victory.

This candle which God lights within us not only bears witness to the evil deed at the time it is committed; it does not refrain from witnessing until the deed has been done; its mission is to keep us from the evil act. Some people seem to think that conscience is only a whip of scorpions to drive a man back to God after he has sinned. But its mission is infinitely more benevolent than that; it is God's warning light to keep us from turning into the evil way.

Theodore Parker tells this incident concerning himself. When he was a very young child—perhaps not more than four years old—one fine day in spring his father led him by the hand to a distant part of the farm, but soon sent him home alone. On his way, in passing a pond, his attention was attracted to a little spotted turtle sunning itself at the root of a shrub. He lifted the stick he had in his hand to strike the harmless reptile; for, tho he had never killed any creature, yet he had seen other boys out of sport destroy birds, squirrels, and the like, and he felt a

disposition to follow their example. "But all at once," says Parker, "something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, 'It is wrong.' I held my uplifted stick with wonder at the new emotion—the consciousness of an involuntary inward check upon my actions. I hastened home, told the tale to my mother, and asked what was it that told me it was wrong. She wiped a tear from her eye, and, taking me in her arms, said, 'Some men call it Conscience; but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen to, and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade out little by little, and leave you all in the dark without a guide. Your life depends on your heeding this little voice.' "

If conscience is to be to us the blessing that God intended, it must be because of our obedience to the testimony and the light which He gives us. Otherwise, it will cease to mean anything to us. I have read recently an interesting little story from the Russian, which is a parable of conscience. According to this story, Conscience was lost, but things

went on as before. Indeed, some people even began to feel themselves more free and more at ease in their minds. Meanwhile, the unfortunate Conscience lay bruised and trodden under foot in the highway.

A wretched drunkard finally picked it up, in the hope that he might be able to sell it for a glass of brandy. All at once, he felt a sort of electric shock through his whole being, and the fumes of wine began to clear away from his brain. Little by little there came back to him the bitter knowledge of his real condition. At first he felt nothing but fear. Then his memory awoke; then his imagination began to speak. From the darkness of the shameful past his pitiless memory recalled every deed of violence, treachery, and injustice of which he had been guilty, while his imagination gave fresh life to all the details. Our drunkard began to shed tears; passers-by gathered around him, declaring that nothing but drink was the matter with him. "My friends, I can not help crying," said the unhappy drunkard; "it is too much for me," and the people shouted with laughter. They did not perceive that he was sober, and that he had really made a discovery

which was breaking his heart; a sorrow's crown of sorrow is to find one's Conscience when one least expects it.

“Oh!” said the wretched creature, “I must rid myself of this, cost what it may, or I am done for,” and he went toward the wine shop of an old acquaintance named Petrovitch. Before going in he peeped carefully through the window, and seeing Petrovitch dozing behind his counter, he opened the door quickly and, without giving Petrovitch time to recognize him, thrust into his hand the terrible find and fled. Some seconds passed before Petrovitch opened his drowsy eyes; then he felt a cold shudder pass over him. He had a sort of vision that he was carrying on his business without proper license; but after a sharp look around he saw that he had all the papers demanded by the authorities.

Seized with a fear hitherto unknown to him, he began to tremble and grow pale. Conscience murmured: “No, no; it won't do to let the poor people make themselves shamefully tipsy.”

Meanwhile, by degrees, the tavern filled with people; but Petrovitch; instead of serving his customers, not only refused to sell

them any wine, but pointed out to them that for the poor all misfortunes began through drink.

“Why, Petrovitch, you must be mad!” said all his astonished customers.

“That’s not very surprizing, my friends,” answered Petrovitch, and he showed them the conscience which the drunkard had thrust upon him, and asked if any one of them would like to have it.

But each one tried to get to the most respectful distance from it, and no one seemed in any hurry to accept the offer.

Tho he did not sell any wine that day, toward evening Petrovitch’s sadness wore off; he became even gay, and said to his wife, “Well, my dear wife, tho we have gained nothing to-day, what does that matter? How light one feels when one has a clear conscience.”

And, indeed, he was asleep almost before his head touched the pillow, slumbering peacefully and not even snoring, whereas in the days when he had made money and had no conscience he invariably snored.

His wife, however, understood very clearly that for a tavern-keeper, conscience was by

no means an acquisition likely to be profitable, so she made up her mind that at any price this unwelcome guest must be got rid of. At dawn she softly stole Conscience from her sleeping husband, and hastened out with it into the street.

And so Conscience was tossed along from one party to another, and passed through many hands; it was not wanted anywhere. At last she said: "This is what I suggest: find me a little Russian baby and lodge me in his pure heart. Perhaps the innocent would receive me and cherish me; as he grew up he might become attached to me, and take me with him into the world. Then perhaps he would not hate me."

The wish of Conscience was granted. A little Russian child was found and Conscience slipped into his pure heart. As the child grows up, Conscience will grow with him; one day he will be a great man with a great conscience. In that day all falsehood, crime, and violence will disappear, for Conscience, grown bolder, will speak and be obeyed.

But I am speaking to some of you who are conscious that your conscience has been bribed and corrupted, that it has been defiled

until it is no longer a safe guide. Its warning has been unheeded so long that it no longer sits in the place of power to point the right way. Created to be the candle of the Lord, your spirit has been lighted by the devil's fire and burns now with a baleful flame. For you there can be only one path of hope and safety, and that is the way of repentance. Jesus Christ hath power not only to forgive your sins, but to cleanse you from an evil conscience. Turn from your sins by repentance and begin to do right through faith in Christ, and nothing will surprize you so much as the way your conscience, which has become seared and hardened, will become sensitive and tender, and the pure light of God's candle in your breast will shine forth again, searching out every inward part and revealing to you the path of beauty and of safety.

THE SUPREME GLORY OF YOUTH

“The glory of young men is their strength.”—Prov. 20:29.

THIS statement is as true to-day as it was when it was written thousands of years ago. But the interpretation given to it changes with the procession of civilization. All men admire strength, but the kind of strength which is revered and honored changes as intelligence and morality and civilization change with any people. If you go back far enough in the story of the Hebrews you will come to a time when Samson was the glory of his people. Samson's glory was in his strength, but in his physical strength only. Because he had the power to seize a young lion in his brawny hands and tear it in pieces; because he could take the jaw-bone of a wild ass and mow down his enemies more rapidly than another man could have done with a sword; because he could carry away the gates of a city on his shoulders, he

was admired and revered, and exalted to be a judge and a leader of the people. Yet to-day we would call him a very weak man, for, despite his marvelous physical strength, it was his intellectual and moral weakness that undermined him and brought him at last to be a miserable slave, compelling him in blindness and degradation to work like a beast of burden for his enemies.

If you want to see the growth in a nation, follow along down the history of these same people to that day when David, a shepherd lad from Bethlehem, went down to the valley of Elah to visit Saul's army. They were fighting against the Philistines, and among the enemy was the great giant, Goliath, a sort of Samson among his people. For six weeks he had held the army of Saul by his challenge to a personal combat which no one in Saul's army had the brute strength to undertake. It was at this time that David came. Now, David had very little physical strength. He was only a ruddy-faced boy, just budding into manhood, and never in his life was large of stature. But the future author of the twenty-third Psalm had another kind of strength. He had a head with more in it

than a hundred such as sat between the shoulders of Goliath. Goliath's head thought about nothing save eating and drinking, and how to fight, in a brutal way, as a bull might fight. But David had a head full of visions and dreams, full of lofty thoughts and noble ideals. David had a heart full of hope and faith that back of all the sights and sounds of nature God waited in the shadows to give victory to the right and to the truth. Up in the hills where he kept his flocks David had put this faith to the test, and with prayer upon his lips and hope in his heart he had dared the bear and the lion that sought to rob him of his lambs, and had come off victorious. So David did not expect to destroy Goliath by meeting him in his own way. The arm of Goliath was as big as the body of David. But David went at Goliath with weapons that the giant knew nothing about. The giant saw the sling and the smooth stone, but he did not see the keen brain and the strong heart with its great faith in God that backed up the arm that sent the stone hurtling through the air with its death-dealing power to crush his forehead.

Here, then, is our theme. The glory of

youth is in its strength; but to be truly glorious it must be the highest kind of strength. I do not for a moment belittle physical strength. The vigor and vitality of youth is a great asset. A distinguished statesman was once sought out by a newspaper man who begged that in an interview he would give the paper some interesting account of the disease that was preying upon him. The statesman, with a quiet smile, replied: "My dear sir, I am suffering from an incurable disease." "What disease?" inquired the reporter. "Old age," the statesman replied. And, indeed, that is the one incurable disease. Every youth is born into the world with a certain fund of vitality which is inherited, and which comes as God's gift, and to take care of that, and if possible increase it by exercise and discipline, is of the greatest importance. We have had in the last administration, as President of the United States, a man whose inheritance of physical strength was very slight indeed, and who, if he had not inherited with his weak body a will-power of remarkable strength, would have lived his life, no doubt, as a very feeble invalid. But Theodore Roosevelt was so strong intellectually and morally that he

set his weak body to such development and discipline that by the time he was thirty years of age he was one of the strongest men, physically, in the country. No one can tell how much of his phenomenal career depended on this extraordinary physical ability, but every one must agree that it has had a very great deal to do with it. So I say to you, take care of your physical strength.

It is a shame for men or women to waste by self-indulgence or dissipation or prodigality of any sort their physical ability, so as to become unnecessary weaklings in the tasks of life.

But important as physical strength is, it is far more important to have a strong mind than strong muscle. It is a great thing to have a strong, well-developed mind in a strong, well-disciplined body; but of the two, the first importance must be given to the strength of mind. And the glory of youth is in that mental agility and freshness, that strength of thought, that clearness of brain, that keenness of perception as well as the plastic condition which makes it possible to gather and keep vast stores of knowledge. And let every young man and every young

woman understand that if they desire to have strong, well-trained minds, with large intelligent grasp upon things that are worth while in mature years, they must make much of their mental strength in youth. A very remarkable man has just passed away in America. Edward Everett Hale, chaplain of the United States Senate up to eighty-seven years of age, has just closed his earthly career. It may well be doubted if any more useful life has been lived during the last century. Throughout his entire life he has been one of those men whose tireless brain has worked for the helping of humanity. His scores of volumes, read by hundreds of thousands, have all had in them the purpose of helpfulness. And this man, who kept so fresh and vital in his enthusiasm and courage up to nearly ninety years of age, owed the splendid output of his intellectual career, as he himself has told us, to the fact that in his boyhood days he was trained and disciplined to live every day and every hour to acquire knowledge or do duties that were worth while.

And so I say to the youth who read these lines, if you would make your intellectual

strength truly glorious, you must use your opportunities for reading, for conversation, and for study so that your minds will not become an ash-pile or a rubbish-heap, so that they shall become a forum for high thinking and noble discussion that will fit you for strong duties and noble associations.

This Rocky Mountain region is a land of mines where men dig deep for gold and silver and copper, but the richest mines in Colorado lie in the possibilities of rare and glorious development of power and riches in the minds and hearts of the youth who are coming out of the schools and the colleges these summer days. Do not imagine that you must wait for some far-off, lucky opportunity to come to you and drop its treasures in your lap. Dig deep in your own mind, cultivate the soil of your own intelligence, make the most of yourself, and you will find there the richest treasures of life.

An Arabian guide once told Russell Conwell this story: There lived on the banks of the Indus river an ancient Persian by the name of El Hafed. From his beautiful and comfortable cottage on the hillside, he could look down on the gleaming river and out

over the glorious sea. He was a man of wealth. His fields and orchards yielded plentifully, and he had money at interest. A beautiful wife and lovely children shared with him the joy of a happy home.

One day there came to the cottage a Persian priest. That priest sat with El Hafed and told him how diamonds were made. "If you had a diamond," said the old priest, "as big as your thumb, you could purchase many farms like this; and if you had a bushel, you could own the whole country."

That moment El Hafed became poor. All his possessions seemed to lose their value, as the feeling of discontent filled his soul. He said: "I must have a mine of diamonds. What is the use of spending one's life in this way, in this narrow sphere? I want a mine of diamonds and shall have it."

That night he could not sleep. Early the next morning he went to the priest and asked where he could find those diamonds. "If you want diamonds," said the priest, "go and get them." "Won't you please tell me where I can find them?" demanded El Hafed. "Well, if you go and find high mountains, with a deep river running between them over

white sand, in this white sand you will find diamonds.”

The enthusiastic, restless and dissatisfied farmer sold his farm, took the money, and went off in search of diamonds. He began to search through Egypt and Palestine. Years passed while he was pursuing his useless journeyings. At last he went over through Europe, and, one day, broken-hearted, in rags, a hungry pauper, stung with humiliation, and crushed by his bitter disappointments, he stood on the shore of the bay of Barcelona. He looked at the big waves as they came rolling in, and listened to the whisper that invited him to peace, and, in the moment of despair, threw himself in and sank, never to rise again.

The man who purchased El Hafed's farm led his camel out one day to the stream at the edge of the garden to drink. While the camel buried his nose in the water, the man noticed a white flash of glittering, glistening, sparkling something at his feet. Out of curiosity he reached down and picked up a black stone with a strange eye of light in it which seemed to reflect all the colors of the rainbow. He took the curiosity to the house

and laid it on the mantel, and soon forgot all about it.

One day this same priest came to visit El Hafed's successor. He noticed the flash of light from the mantel and sprang toward it in amazement, and exclaimed: "Here is a diamond! Has El Hafed returned?" "Oh no, that is not a diamond. It is a stone we found out in the garden." "But I tell you that is a diamond," and the two men went out in the garden and stirred up the white sand, and there came up in their hands beautiful diamonds, more valuable than the first.

This is all historically true. It was the discovery of the wonderful mines of Golconda, and the founding of the line of Great Moguls. The priest swung his cap and said, "Had El Hafed remained at home and dug in his own garden, he would have been the wealthiest man of his time and the most honored."

The application of this story is not hard to see. The richest gold or diamond mine for you lies in your own personality, for, after all, it is not what a man has, but what he is, that signifies whether he is glorious or contemptible.

There is another kind of strength, however,

which is necessary to maintain true glory in the physical and intellectual realm. Moral strength is a governor which maintains the balance in a human personality. Many men, strong mentally and physically, noted for their brilliant intellectual achievements, have been overthrown and destroyed through lack of moral strength. Lord Byron was the most brilliant man of his time, but moral weakness covered him with disgrace.

Some years ago a stranger stood in the midst of a crowd of visitors under the dome of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. While he was gazing upward, awed and silent, at the grandeur and sublimity of the architecture, the verger touched him on the shoulder, and asked him to move his foot a little to one side. He started back, and saw in the stone floor a small cross, cut deep by a mason's chisel. It was the mark of a soul-murder: for on that spot a young man had fallen who, in the utter hopelessness of his despair, had thrown himself from the "Whispering Gallery" above. The group of visitors, who had been gay and light-hearted, were awed to silence at the thought that there, on the spot before them, a youth, broken and spoiled by

sin and moral weakness, had plunged headlong into eternity. If every spot on our Denver pavements, and in our homes and business houses, where moral weakness had brought its victims to shame and death, were marked like that, how checkered the city would be. Let us not forget there is no true glory to youth save as it is governed and controlled by moral principle.

But the supreme glory of youth is in spiritual strength. Youth is never at its best without hope in God, without enthusiasm for high and holy ideals, without faith in the great spiritual realities, and without that communion and fellowship with Christ that brings to the heart and the eye the glow of heroic devotion to goodness and to truth. Spiritual strength can not be perfect unless the spirit of Christ dwell in us. W. L. Watkinson says the world is full of people who are ambitious to become poets, painters, musicians, or orators; but, despite wearisome application, they never do anything really first rate; the masterpiece is not forthcoming: they fail in the supreme music, the noblest art, or the truest eloquence. What do these baffled aspirants need to secure to them the

raptures of triumph? Give that despairing musician an atom of Mozart's melodious brain, that halting poet a spark of Shakespeare's fire, that struggling painter a nerve of Turner's color-sense, that stammering orator a lick of Demosthenes' tongue, and the bitter failure would be at an end. So it is with our aspirations after a high and holy life. It is the spirit of Christ that we need. The apostle had it right when he said, "Christ in you, the hope of glory"—not the glory of the future only, but the glory of character here and now. In repentance, in humility, with faith in Jesus Christ as your divine Savior—give yourself up to Him and let Him possess you and master and control you, and His spiritual strength and glory shall become yours.

THE LAZY MAN AND THE LIONS

“The sluggard saith, There is a lion without; I shall be murdered in the streets.”—Prov. 22 : 13.

“The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion in the streets.”—Prov. 26 : 13.

IN an old church in the city of London a curious service has been held for more than two hundred and fifty years each 16th of October. It is in St. Katherine Cree’s, Leadenhall Street, and what is called the “Lion Sermon” is preached. This is the story of it: There was once in the city a very pious man called Sir John Gayer. At one time he was Lord Mayor of London. Sir John happened to be in Asia at one period of his life, and when he, with his caravan, was traveling through a desert place, he found himself face to face and alone with a lion. Everybody of his company who could help him had gone forward. Sir John knew that only God could deliver him. He thought of Daniel in the den of lions. He thought of Paul, who at

one time was expecting to meet an emperor as cruel as a lion. And he fell upon his knees there before the beast and shut his eyes and cried to God to shut the mouth of the lion. His wise courage in not running away, and his unexpected conduct in thus facing him on his knees, was too much for the lion, and when the good man opened his eyes, having finished his prayer, the lion was nowhere to be seen. So when he came back to London, he set aside a sum of money to furnish gifts to poor people and to provide for the preaching of a sermon to tell the generations to come how God heard his prayer and delivered him from the mouth of the lion.

Now, Sir John Gayer, London's ancient Lord Mayor, and Solomon's Sir Sluggard are by no means the only people who have to face lions in the way of life. There is a lion in the way of every man and woman in the world. Life, if it be true life, is not an easy thing.

We are judged as much by the way we treat the lions of difficulty which confront us as by anything else. Solomon is here treating of a general tendency of human nature. The tendency is in all of us to lie back and keep

out of the street if we imagine there is a difficulty in the way that will make us uncomfortable and require unusual exertion or sacrifice on our part. At every point along the procession of the human race this question of laziness always faces us. Prof. Carl Hiltz recently said, "No social problems would exist if all faithfully worked." The social menace of to-day is the impassable gulf fixed between extreme riches and extreme poverty; on one hand the few gathering enormous wealth without any real, productive work; and on the other, the many toiling for a bare pittance or only just existing below the poverty line. And so long as the dictum of one of America's richest millionaires—"the man who succeeds best in the world is he who knows how to avail himself of the labors of other men"—is admitted as a rule of human society, so long will that menace grow more and more menacing. The ideal Christian state will not be realized till the human hive knows no drones. "One monster there is in the world, the idle man," cries Thomas Carlyle. "Every being that can live can do something; this let him do. Produce, produce, were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of

a fraction of a product; produce it in God's name. 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it, then. Up! Up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.'" It is significant that the modern prophet of labor thus found no better words to express his strenuous doctrine than those of Jesus the Carpenter, whose teaching, as well as example, is full of the gospel of work. It was the Carpenter who not only told the parable of the Talents, with its severe condemnation of the non-producer, "Thou wicked and slothful servant," and the story of the Laborers, with its wondering expostulation to the unemployed, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" but also pronounced work to be essentially God-like when he cried, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Now these reflections concerning the elemental problem of labor are typical of the whole problem of life. Men who shirk the fight with their lions of difficulty are doomed from the start. The New Testament declaration, that if we resist the devil he will flee from us, is true. If he does not flee of his

own accord, the man who really confronts his difficulties with a brave heart overcomes them and in doing so becomes a stronger and a better man.

I remember a few years ago a young man who was in Harvard College who brought a suit before the New York courts on a plea that \$10,000 a year be set apart out of his income to appropriately support him while he was a schoolboy. The papers made a good deal of it, and no doubt a good many young fellows who had been selling books or working in the harvest-fields in order to earn money to help themselves through college, were inclined to envy that gay young blood with his ten thousand dollars a year pocket-money. But they had no reason for envy. History since its dawn does not record the name of a single man who spent ten thousand dollars a year in college, who laid in college the foundations of greatness. Where one young man is permanently harmed by poverty, a dozen are smothered to death in the feather-bed of luxury. The path of true greatness is not that of self-indulgence, but of struggle and self-denial.

The old classic story tells us that Hercules

first killed the dragon that watched the Golden Apple in the garden of the Hesperides, and then bore away the precious fruit. Everything worth winning is guarded by a dragon that must be conquered.

When Napoleon was marching to the conquest of Italy, he came to a river at the foot of the Alps. He was told by his engineers that they could not get the artillery across that deep, swift stream. But Napoleon said, "We must cross this stream here, or we can not see Italy. This stream is the first thing to attend to. Devote your attention to this first, and then we will enter Italy." It was Bismarck who said almost the same thing with reference to a marsh the German armies had to cross during the Franco-Prussian war. "Men," said Bismarck, "we must cross this marsh or we can not see Paris." So men and women must face the personal lions of difficulty that lie in the street in front of their own house, or that confront them in the way which duty calls them, or they can not come to the success which beckons them on.

And nothing will give any man so much peace, so much true comfort, as the brave and persistent overcoming of difficulties.

Norman Duncan, in his book, "Doctor Grenfell's Parish," tells of meeting an old Newfoundlander who had fished from one harbor for sixty years. He computed for Mr. Duncan that he had put out to sea in his punt at least twenty thousand times, that he had been frozen to the seat of his punt many times, that he had been swept to sea with the ice-packs many times, that he had weathered six hundred gales, great and small, and that he had been wrecked more times than he could "just mind" at the moment. Yet he was the only man, Duncan says, whom he ever met who seemed honestly to wish that he might live his life over again.

These illustrations of our theme but lead us to the greater theme that has to do with the spiritual manhood and womanhood which it is our duty and privilege to build up in ourselves. For the supreme end of our human lives is to develop, in the face of difficulties, a noble personality, a high and lofty character that will justify the stupendous experiment of God's providence in man's creation. And it is as true that the man who shirks his duty, which calls him to lead a truly Christian and spiritual life, because of the lions that

lie in the street or that lurk in the way where he works, will fail of developing a worthy personality, as it is that the lazy man will go hungry for bread.

The men who have developed into great characters have been those who have faced great difficulties bravely. In preparing for this discourse I have reread with the same interest and enthusiasm which it always revives in me, the story of Nehemiah. And as I read it I noted again what he says about some people who tried to draw him away from his great work. He says: "Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I can not come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? And they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner."

Nehemiah has given us an eminent example of the man who refuses to be hindered in the great work of his life. It is a glorious thing to have something on hand worth doing and

then to prosecute that work with unflinching purpose. It is never easy to succeed in a great work. The devil who hindered God's servants in ancient times still goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and he will not be more friendly to us than he was to men and women in earlier years. The world and the flesh are as full of enmity to spirituality and to all nobility of career now as ever, and we may depend upon it that there will be efforts to hinder us in every honest attempt we make to live a noble and useful life. If we permit ourselves to be easily hindered, then our star will go down in darkness. We need to emphasize over and over again to ourselves these great lessons which inspire us not only to courage, but that kind of persevering courage which continues until the end.

In studying the character of Nehemiah we have suggested to us the great fact that he was inspired by a noble purpose. It was no vain ambition which called him to set his heart on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. It was a matter of holy patriotism. The purpose was born in prayer. When the news came to him in the foreign palace, where he

was employed in a position of great profit and honor, that the Holy City was ravished and his brethren were in distress, he gave himself up to prayer, and in that secret communion with God there was born a lofty ambition which involved great personal sacrifice on Nehemiah's part. He must leave the great king who had honored him; he must banish himself from the elegant and luxurious palace where his life was full of comfort; he must go back to hardship and exacting toil and self-denial; he must become the target for all the bitter enemies of his people. But above all this there loomed up the great hope of a Jerusalem renovated and rebuilt, with her splendid walls resisting all the aggressions of her foes, with her temple resounding with songs of gratitude and thronged with reverent and thankful worshipers. It was this purpose which dominated the mind and heart of Nehemiah and gave him power to resist all who would hinder him in the accomplishment of his great work.

The story of Nehemiah ought also to suggest that there are often possibilities of growth and development in a young man or a young woman that even their best friends

do not suspect. Who could have foretold that in that modest, smiling cup-bearer to the king there were hidden away the possibilities of a great general, a shrewd financier, an accomplished man of affairs, and with it all a great, reverent, noble-minded statesman? Nehemiah took his opportunity and developed what was in him, and there blossomed on the stalk of his life a career more splendid than ever he dreamed of. You never can tell what will happen when a young man begins to grow. Margaret Fuller once said: "The only object in life is to grow." Work, struggle, exercise, produce growth, while laziness, idleness, ease, stop and hinder growth. It is our duty to grow. I know it is said that at somewhere about fifty years of age men and women cease to grow and no longer have the power which comes from new impulse and are no longer capable of fresh enterprise. But we are constantly seeing men and women who give the lie to all this. The fact is, the deadline runs through any man's or woman's life the day he or she ceases to grow; but one does not cease to grow so long as he works and struggles with high ideals and earnest enthusiasm. As another has well said, growth

is not merely a question of increasing strength or of mental alertness; it is quite as much a ripening of the nature; the development of judgment, wisdom, moderation, sympathy; the quiet contemplation of the facts of life. The lustiness of youth is not conducive to gentleness and moderation, to patience and faith. When the physical powers are at the height of their capacity, their influence is too dominating for the growth of the gentle virtues or for the development of the interior life. Growth of insight, spiritual vision, mental ripeness, do not depend on failure of the body or on its being at its full strength, but on experience, openness of mind, desire to learn, and willingness to profit by all that life brings us of good or ill.

Growth in spiritual things is constantly retarded and hindered in many people by the dominating influence of worldly things. It happens to many a man and woman that in the absorbing demands of business or professional life, of home duties or the claims of society, there is a gradual failure of moral purpose or of religious convictions, and while the life grows in one direction it as surely degenerates in another. We

can cultivate any part of our nature that we will, just as the gardener or horticulturist, by selecting certain qualities, gradually develops a new kind of potato or corn, a new variety of strawberry or apple. We can make ourselves new kinds of men and women by giving attention to business or pleasure, books, music, athletics, or religion. Spiritual things are not of interest to us where we do not cultivate them, just as business becomes dull if we do not give attention to it and try to make it interesting. As no man can be strong unless he takes much exercise, so no man can be devout who does not wrestle with God in prayer early and late. It is a true but solemn conclusion that we are the kind of men we make ourselves by our toil and our play, our hopes and our fears, our fidelity of mind, and our loyalty of heart. When the mind is open and alert, the heart gentle and loving, the conscience firm and unfailing, the will strong and steadfast, we are sure to grow into larger manhood and womanhood; and there is nothing else for the sake of which life is worth living.

Do any hear me who have sought to grow and to develop the talent God has given, who

yet have met with so many hindrances as to be discouraged and ready to give up in despair? Let me urge upon you that you are not the first who has been tempted to give up on the very eve of great success. God knows your trials; He is acquainted with all the circumstances of your life, and watches over you with great tenderness. If you will persevere and seek to make the best out of what you are and out of the opportunities He gives, He will be as faithful to you as He was to Nehemiah. There is always one thing we can do, and that is to go ahead. It is always right to do right; it often looks as tho it might be dead failure to do it, but that is ever a delusion. We can afford to take Mrs. Sangster's advice: "Take Heart and Go On." She sings very truly:

Sometimes we are almost discouraged,
The way is so cumbered and steep;
Sometimes, tho we're spent with the sowing,
There cometh no harvest to reap.
And we faint on the road and we falter,
As our faith and our courage are gone,
Till a voice, as we kneel at the altar,
Commands us: "Take heart and go on."

THE GIFT OF THE HEART

“My son, give me thine heart.”—Prov. 23:26.

IN Baltimore one Sunday morning, as the people were going to church, a telegraph-pole, large and strong and round, looking as stalwart as any other in the line, suddenly did a strange thing. Without any warning, like a great, strong man struck down by an unseen bullet, the pole groaned, and then, with a snapping, tearing, grinding sound, the upper portion fell to the street, leaving about twenty-five feet standing. The people looked on and wondered. A crowd soon gathered, marveling at what should have caused such a catastrophe. There was no hurricane, not even a brisk breeze, and surely not enough to sever such a pole as that, which had weathered so many storms. Just then a small boy began to climb the stump that was left, to investigate. When he reached the top, he found that right where the pole had broken was a scooped-out place where a pair of woodpeckers had cut out their nest, and there

in the nest was a poor little woodpecker, frightened half to death. Unnoticed, but steadily, stroke after stroke, the birds had dug their way back into the heart of the great strong telegraph-pole, until they had sapped its strength. Sometimes a man comes crashing down in the city. His outer life has seemed strong and round and respectable. People have believed in him and trusted in him, but he suddenly comes down in his ruin. The whole world marvels at it; but after a little it is discovered that some secret sin had eaten into his heart, and the strength of the man's life was gone, tho he looked to the world as strong as ever.

It is with a man as with a tree, the center of life and power is in the heart. Wendell Phillips, in his great lecture on "Public Opinion," used to say: "They tell us that this heart of mine, which beats so unintermittedly in the bosom, if its force could be directed against a granite pillar, would wear it to dust in the course of a man's life. You may build your capitol of granite, and pile it high as the Rocky Mountains; if it is founded on or mixed up with iniquity, the pulse of a girl will in time beat it down."

Nothing can stand in the way of the man who puts heart enough into the work of his life, and on the other hand, no ability is great enough to assure a noble career unless it is entered upon with heartiness. You may see a remarkable illustration and in some ways a most pathetic one in the case of Lord Rosebery, ex-Prime Minister of Great Britain. No young man of modern times ever had so great an opportunity to write his name in the first rank of the history of his age. A man of immense ability, of splendid education, with a gift of eloquence unsurpassed by any man now speaking the English language, of the highest social position and with unlimited wealth, he was made Prime Minister of England in his youngest manhood. Yet it is the enigma of England that this man, having all the resources which other men envy combined in one man, seemingly through indifference, through lack of heart in his work, has allowed his opportunities to be frittered away and will live in history only as a failure followed by an interrogation mark.

Emerson says, genius unexerted is no more genius than a bushel of acorns is a forest of oaks. There may be epics in men's brains,

just as there are oaks in acorns, but the tree and the book must come out before we can measure them. We very naturally recall here that class of grumblers and wishers who spend their time in longing to be higher than they are, while they should be employed in advancing themselves. These bitterly moralize upon the injustice of society. Do they want a change? Let them change—who prevents them? If you are as high as your faculties will permit you to rise in the scale of society, why should you complain of men? It is God that arranged the law of precedence. Implead Him or be silent. If you have capacity for a higher station, take it—what hinders you? How many men would love to go to sleep and wake up Rothschilds or Astors?

How many men would fain go to bed dunces to be waked up Solomons? You reap what you have sown. Those who sow dunce-seed, vice-seed, laziness-seed, usually get a crop. They that sow wind reap a whirlwind. We have Scripture for it that a “living dog is better than a dead lion.” If you would go up, go; if you would be seen, shine.

What I wish, first of all, to impress upon

our minds and hearts is that the heart is the center of power. A good mind is important, a cultivated, disciplined mind is important, but not so important as a good strong heart. I have known many a weak and stumbling mind to do great service in the world because it was engineered and dominated by a good heart; and on the other hand, history is full of picturesque illustrations of men and women who had brilliant minds, richly endowed, who were of little or no service to the world and came to a disastrous end because they were betrayed by a treacherous heart.

This is true of the happiness of life. It radiates from the heart as light radiates from the sun.

A Hindu trader in Kherwara market once asked Pema, "What medicine do you put on your face to make it shine so?"

Pema answered, "I don't put anything on."

"No, but what do you put on?" again asked the Hindu trader.

"Nothing. I don't put anything on."

"Yes, you do. All you Christians do. I have seen it in Agra, and I have seen it in Ahmadabad and Surat, and I have seen it in Bombay."

Pema laughed, and his happy face shone the more, as he said, "Yes, I'll tell you the medicine: it is happiness of heart."

Now, I have pursued this line of thought that we might come to the important theme suggested in our text with awakened interest. God asks for the heart, because the only safe way of life for us is to yield our heart with all its wonderful power of affection and emotion and energy to divine control. The heart left without a master is sure to fall into bad hands. I once lived in a community which for a long time was greatly annoyed by a gang of tramps, who pillaged the farmhouses and defied the authorities. These lawless men made their headquarters in an empty barn, where they brought their plunder and enjoyed their hideous revels. A sinful heart is in much the condition of that barn. The heart naturally belongs to God, and ought to be the treasure-house of good thoughts and holy purposes and sweet and happy musings. But evil lusts and appetites and sins, like vagrant tramps, invade the heart and make it their den of debauch. They go out through the eyes and the ears of their miserable victim and bring plunder on which to revel. Jesus

Christ can dispossess these enemies and garrison the rescued soul with angelic soldiery.

Earlier in this series of discourses we studied as one of our themes Solomon's earnest appeal, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." And now to-night, in this same Book of Proverbs, we have an equally earnest appeal, "Son, give me thine heart." It seems a strange way to keep the heart, by giving it away; yet that must have been what Jesus meant when he said, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it." We have many historical illustrations of this sort of keeping by giving away. Napoleon left Egypt and went to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean with his army. He took Joppa as he passed and was about to take Acre also. The Turks knew that they could not hold Acre alone. They signaled to the British fleet for help. English stores and men came quickly in, and Englishmen took command, and for sixty days the twelve thousand sons of France hurled themselves against the old town in vain. Turkey could not hold it alone, so she gave it to England in time of peril and got it back when the danger was past.

A similar thing happened in the story of the Fiji Islands in the Southern Seas. These are a small group of islands containing about 100,000 inhabitants, but with a wonderfully rich and productive territory. Some years ago their leading men looked out upon the world and felt they were in danger of losing their freedom. They saw France, Germany, and Holland seizing all the territory they could find. Their turn would come next. They thought of a plan; England gave her colonies liberty. So they wrote to Queen Victoria and asked her to take the Fiji Islands under her protection, and in 1874 they came under the English flag. They gave themselves to England to retain their liberty, to be protected from tyrannical foes.

These historical incidents truly illustrate our condition. The heart of man is never held by himself; either evil or God will reign there. Christ is the natural master of the human heart. No one understands it as He does. If you will yield it to Him, He will bring out of it its supreme music.

On an old castle wall, says the legend, there hung a strange instrument. Its strings were broken and it was covered with dust. People

went in and out and wondered at it. No one saw its use. One day a stranger came to the castle. He entered the hall where the instrument, long unused, hung. Taking it down, he tenderly brushed off the dust and replaced the broken strings. Then, as his fingers swept over it, strains of sweetest music came forth. Those who were near stood in awe and their hearts were touched. They asked each other, "How came this stranger to know the value of the harp?" Ah, he was the master, who had been long absent and now returned unto his own. The human heart is the most wonderful musical instrument in the world. It is far more sensitive than any harp or violin ever made by the skill of man. It can be played upon by anger or love or sorrow or joy or ambition; envy and jealousy can extract from it fearful discords, while sympathy and mercy can touch it into a music so sweet that the angels will stoop to listen. Christ is the great musician to whom the human heart belongs. He only can bring out its noblest music.

Dr. R. J. Campbell, the English preacher, tells of a young fellow who came into his vestry to see him one Sunday after the serv-

ice, and told him he came from the north of England, and soon he plunged into telling the preacher of his life history. He had become very homesick. He said he wanted to go back. He did not like the people in southern England. He objected to the way they sang in church. They could not sing as Lancashire people did. Finally, he ended up an eloquent apostrophe to the charms of his native town by saying, "My father is the noblest and best man in the north of England." The preacher said, "Well, my lad, that is a large order. It seems to me you might possibly find some as good as your father. I am glad you think as you do. Would you mind telling me why?" "Oh," he said, "I have never stopt to reckon it up, but I can tell you, I have never met a man so good as my father. I could not help loving him for his goodness." The preacher did not try to convince him that he was wrong. He thought it a fine thing he could think it, but he was imprest with the statement that the boy had never stopt to reckon it up. He loved his father because he could not help it. Spirit answered unto spirit.

Communion of soul is the only real com-

munion. When you have given yourself to God in Jesus Christ, with complete surrender, there is a communion which does not have to be reckoned up in order to bring joy and gladness. We are sorry for sin then, because it might grieve Jesus. We thank God for His goodness, and we love Him, but it is the union of spirit with spirit that is precious to our soul. We know His touch, whether it comes to us in sorrow or in joy.

A little girl was very sick, and the father was anxious about her. About midnight he went to her room and tiptoed over to her bed, and watched as she lay, as he thought, asleep. By and by he put his hand on her head, and promptly, without opening her eyes or turning, she said, "Good-night, father." The father said, "Little one, how did you know it was I who touched you?" "Oh," she said, "I can always tell your touch without opening my eyes or hearing you speak." So the truly loving heart, surrendered to God to do His will, comes to know the touch of God; becomes sensitive to spiritual influence and impression.

Now, it is impossible to live in such fellowship with God and Christ and the Holy Spirit

and not be transformed into the divine image. Sin will slough off. Evil tempers will disappear. We will come to have the spirit of Christ. Love and unselfishness will dominate and control us, and no one will be able to resist that charm. Being lovable, we shall attract love. It is glorious to live in the world if we may live in that spirit, with our faces toward heaven. If we thus live, we shall breathe the air of the "Delectable Mountains" about which Bunyan wrote, and a more recent poet has sung:

We walk at large, released and free,
From Doubting Castle's dreary cell,
No captives of the night are we;
The day hath dawned, the shadows flee,
And all within us wakes to tell,
"He doeth all things well."

Our Leader's strong and tender hand
Sustains us in the upward road;
We journey through Immanuel's land;
We climb the hills whose slopes command
Fair glimpses of the blest abode
Where we shall rest with God.

APPLES OF GOLD IN BASKETS OF SILVER

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.”—Prov. 25 : 11. [R. V.]

MORE than any other age in the history of the world this is the age of words. We speak and write more words to-day than ever before. Trace back through history and the world gets more reticent the farther you go back. This is very naturally true because the development of language and the cultivation of habits of expression have made it easier for us to utter our thoughts. The American Indian of a few hundred years ago talked very little, but I do not doubt that he talked fully as much as we would if it were as hard for us to talk as it was for him. Indeed, speech is so easy to-day, and is uttered so abundantly, that we are likely to think carelessly about words and their use. We must not undervalue words. We can not undervalue them, except at our peril. One of Plutarch's ten orators advertised in Athens that he would “cure distempers of the mind

with words." And Emerson declares that no man has a prosperity so high or firm but that two or three words can dishearten him, and that there is no calamity which right words will not begin to redress.

Many words have personality and character like people—indeed, they are more than words; they are pictures! There are some words that blossom like flowers in the garden, words that grow green as the grass on the hillside, and still others that clap their hands in the tree-tops. There are words full of laughter and music, which come singing through the air as from merry lips. Whenever you read or hear these words, you seem to see scattered sunshine sprinkled through green boughs and listen to the murmur of running water. There are words that are beautiful, and words that are sacred. There are words which can not be spoken in anger; words that soften the harshest voice and mellow the sternest heart. There are ugly words, that when heard or spoken make one feel as tho one had been defiled. There are sublime words, that exalt the soul and lift one up into the realm of high and noble things. There are words of peace and quiet; there

are words of war, with the sound of drums and the quick step of marching music in them. There are words that whistle like rifle-bullets. There are ironclad words, words that are like the old knights in armor, with spear at rest, sword drawn. There are challenging words, that call a halt and throw down the gauntlet of battle. There are words that poison, and there are words that heal. There are words that shame, and there are words that adorn and make beautiful.

Our text suggests the high value which Solomon put on well-chosen words. It was customary in his day, when a banquet was given by an Eastern king, to present each guest with an apple of gold. These golden apples were placed upon the tables in baskets of silver filagree work, and through the meshes the glittering fruit gleamed and flashed upon the guests. I am sure it will be valuable to us if, for a few moments, we reflect upon certain kinds of words which it is possible for each one of us to fitly speak, that will be to those who receive them like "apples of gold in baskets of silver."

I am sure that this figure might well be applied to kind words. Many years ago a

little Quaker boy lived in his father's humble home in the valley of the Merrimac River in Massachusetts. He was a ragged, bare-footed little fellow, but thoughtful and earnest, and at odd times he tried to write verse. A good country newspaper came to his father's house every week and was read by the boy. In the paper was a poet's corner, and he wondered whether he could not get into it, and so he tried. He wrote a poem on the "Deity," and sent it to the paper, with some fear that it might be refused.

The boy was making fences one day, when the postman, riding by, threw the paper over the fence to him in the field. It contained his poem, and he was so excited over it he could hardly get back to his work. Afterward he wrote that it was the proudest moment of his life. One day a little later he was hoeing in the field, when he was called to the house and told that a man had come to see John Greenleaf Whittier. He wondered who could want to see him. He was bare-footed and in his shirt-sleeves, and crept into the house by the back door. After putting on his shoes and vest and coat, and smoothing his hair, he entered the room, painfully

embarrassed. The visitor said: "My name is William Lloyd Garrison. I am editor of the *Free Press*. I printed your poem on the Deity, and I was so pleased with it I thought I would come and see what the author looked like. I see you are young; you ought to go to some academy or college and fit yourself for a literary life, to which you are adapted." When the visitor had gone, Whittier talked the matter over with his parents; they told him they had no money for tuition; that they could hardly spare him from the farm if they had the means, and that poetry would not make bread. But the visitor had put into the young man's heart a seed that was to produce a wonderful harvest. He got a farm-hand, who understood the shoemaker's trade, to teach him how to make ladies' slippers out of soft leather, and he made enough out of his wares in one season to buy a suit of clothes and pay his tuition and board for half a year. And he tells us that all through those years that followed, during which he struggled for an education, Garrison's kind words to the barefooted boy were the light that ever beckoned him onward.

We ought never to fail to speak a kind

word, for its value may be far beyond our power to estimate, and there is no one so humble or so limited in opportunity but that the privilege of speaking kind words is within his reach. Here is a wealth—indeed, the most precious of all riches of the world—that the poorest of us may dispense in great blessing. Strange that we should be so miserly of our riches in kind words, when by giving them away we only increase our store.

Encouraging words are also among the golden apples which the poorest of us may give away to those in need. James Whitcomb Riley was once approached by a young man who has since made a literary success, but who at the time was completely broken-hearted. He said to Mr. Riley that his manuscripts were constantly returned, and that he was the most miserable wretch alive. Riley asked him how long he had been trying. "Three years," he said. "My dear man," answered the poet, laughingly, "go on. Keep on trying till you have spent as many years at it as I did. I struggled through years, through sleepless nights, through almost hopeless days. For twenty years I tried to get into one magazine; back came my manu-

scripts, eternally. I kept on. In the twentieth year that magazine accepted one of my articles." The young man took courage at the hopeful words and struggled on.

We all need these golden apples of encouragement, and many faint and die for the lack of them. There was something pathetic in the appeal which a little boy made to his father when he cried, "I often do wrong, I know, and then you scold me and I deserve it; but, father, sometimes I try my best to do right. Won't you let me know when I do please you?"

No words are so encouraging as sincere appreciation of the work which we have honestly tried to do well. Elizabeth Channing says she does not know what the human heart did without the art of letter-writing in olden times. For in writing we are much more likely to say kind and appreciative things than we are when we are face to face with our friends. We sometimes forget to speak loving words, and it is a great pity that we do, but we write a good many, and the hearts of men and women are greatly refreshed by such words. There is no doubt that we should develop into much nobler men and women

if only a small portion of the appreciation and commendation which is lavished on our graves should come to the listening ear of life while we are in the midst of the trying struggle. Just criticism has its use, and every wise man or woman should be thankful for it, tho at the time it is grievous to bear. I am of the opinion that we get enough of that. But honest approval is like the water that pours forth on the irrigated fields of Colorado. It makes the soul grow. Criticism is the acid that destroys vanity; approval and appreciation, which encourage the soul, are the honey that heals self-distrust.

Cheerful words have their right to be in baskets of silver on the every-day tables of life. I remember how my heart warmed at reading some years ago a letter written by a soldier who was stationed in the Philippines. He said that when his regiment first went out to Manila there were a great many homesick men. Everybody had the blues—that is, nearly everybody—for there were a few who had been born with a cheery, good-humored temperament and with the disposition to see the bright, happy side of everything. They soon discovered that every battery, troop,

company, or even squad contained at least one man in whom the sense of humor was highly developed. This man was a great blessing to his comrades. He could see the ridiculous side of every hardship, every phase of camp life, and every misfortune. He was optimistic, cheerful, and sanguine, yet kindly considerate of the feelings of others. He could find a joke where most men would never dream it could exist. Even the most trivial incident he would turn to the most humorous account. If the sun was too hot, he would remind them that it would reduce the weight of each man so that the next march would be all the more easy. If the mess was bad, why, mother's pies would be all the more appreciated when they got home. The writer declares that these laughing, good-humored soldiers were the greatest benediction to the army and saved the lives of many discouraged, homesick volunteers. Clean, wholesome humor is just as valuable in every department of life. It is a great mistake to suppress the humorous spirit. God gave it to us for development and use, and we should use it as one of His good gifts to bring good cheer to our fellow men.

It is especially true that cheerful, happy words are of rich value in our home life. When we meet our loved ones at the table there is a golden opportunity to impart courage and to dispense happiness. What a shame it is to be witty and courageous and cheerful among comparative strangers, and then sit at the table among the people who are most under our influence and look glum and dumb, as tho we had been summoned to eat crow on toast. Life is very short and rapidly changing, and it will not be long till some of those chairs will be empty. We ought to treasure up the happiest incidents and stories, the most beautiful ideas, to repeat at meal-time. If we banish the blues and the blames from the table, it will become not only the fountain of physical strength, but of mental and spiritual recreation. We ought to summon ourselves to be at our very best in our homes. Some one sings on this theme:

You may breathe a pious blessing
Over viands rich and good,
But a blessing with long faces
Won't assimilate your food.
While a meal of bread and herring,
With a glass of water clear,

Is a feast if it's accompanied
With the blessing of good cheer.
Knowing something funny, tell it;
Something sad, forget to knell it;
Something hateful, quick dispel it;
At the table.

Words of sympathy are apples of gold. Sympathy is so precious a thing that when a word of sympathy springs up in the heart we ought never to allow it to die unuttered. Words of sympathy are not always easily spoken, and they ought not to be spoken carelessly. Anything so beautiful as sympathy deserves a proper setting, and it is always worth our while to study and ponder out the words that will give the greatest comfort to those to whom we are to speak sympathetically. Words of sympathy should be spoken cheerfully. No man had a greater gift or a nobler art in speaking such words than John Wesley. On one occasion, speaking to a woman in trouble—a trouble that was beyond her comprehension and for which she could see no reason—Wesley said: “Do you know why a cow looks over a stone wall?”

The woman looked up with her eyes full of tears. “No,” she answered.

“Why,” said Wesley, “it is because she can not see through it, and that is just the way with your trouble. You can not see through it, so you must look over it, and go on doing your duty.”

We can not imagine that that woman ever forgot the sympathy or comfort of that conversation.

To speak words of sympathy and real comfort requires that we shall put ourselves in the other's place and feel something of the struggle which the other heart knows. One of the tenderest things I ever heard Mr. Moody relate was an account of his going in his young manhood, when he was a Sunday-school superintendent in Chicago, to see a very poor woman whose little child was dead. After asking her a few questions, he took out his tape-line and, measuring the little form, told her that he would be back after a while.

Walking away by his side, his own little child said, “Papa, would you care if I were to die?” That question from his child who had witnessed his cold, unsympathetic demeanor was a home thrust. It was an innocent yet keen rebuke which cut to the heart. True words of sympathy can only be born of

a fellow-feeling with our neighbor in his sorrow. And if we would be fitted to speak such words, we must hold ourselves day by day to live in such sensitive touch with our fellow men that we will obey the injunction of Paul, which requires us to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

There is one other class of golden words to which I ought to refer for a moment, and that is words spoken in rebuke of evil and in testimony for righteousness. Such words are often necessary, but they are not golden unless they are spoken in love, and with sympathetic, thoughtful care.

Jesse Lee, the founder of Methodism in New England, served as chaplain of Congress for several terms. Once upon the adjournment of Congress he took the south-bound stage for his Virginia home, only to find it already crowded with members traveling in the same direction. His two hundred and sixty pounds noticeably and materially decreased the space and increased the load. At length the coach, pitching and lurching along the sticky road of red clay, gave a plunge into an apparently bottomless mud-hole, whence the steaming horses declined to

pull it. The passengers got out, and after much labor with fence-rails succeeded in getting it started. Upon its halting at the top of a hill for the passengers to resume their seats, the chaplain took his place with the rest, altho the absence of mud from his clothes and hands did not make it appear that he had assisted in extricating the vehicle. "Where was the chaplain," asked one, "when we were getting the stage out of the mud?" A merry laugh passed round at his expense. He bore their mild badgering in good part, until at length one said a bit tartly, "It was rather unchristian-like in the chaplain to stay with us when all was quiet and smooth, and then to desert us when the storm and wreck came."

"Ah, gentlemen," said the chaplain, "I intended to have pried with you, but some of you swore so hard I went out behind a tree and prayed for you." The recollection of their language, together with the fineness of the rebuke, put a stop to their badgering, as well as to the use of such language for the rest of the journey.

One thing we must never forget when we feel it to be our duty to speak an unwel-

come truth or to give utterance to words that are likely to give pain, and that is that we must speak in love. It is love only that can take away the sting of such words and make them do good rather than harm. The truth without love often becomes a falsehood. It is only the truth spoken in love that comes to be the divine messenger.

THE FOLLY OF TRUSTING TO TO-MORROW

“Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”—Prov. 27:1.

ADDISON, in his “Vision of Mirza,” has given the most graphic description in all literature of the mystery of time; the uncertainty of life; the agonies which, like vultures, feed upon the human heart, and the beauties of the realm the good possess beyond the gates of death.

Addison tells us, in his strange story, of an Oriental scholar who was spending a day upon the hill of Bagdad, when he fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another, he said, “Man is but a shadow and life a dream.” While he was thus musing, he cast his eyes toward the summit of a rock not far from him, where he discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a musical instrument in his hand. As he looked,

the shepherd raised it to his lips and began to play upon it. The sound was very sweet and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious. They seemed to the listener worthy to be the heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of their last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. His heart melted in sacred rapture.

As he listened, the Oriental writer tells us, the musical shepherd, the Genius of the Valley, beckoned to him, and he drew near with reverence but with gladness. The Genius took him by the hand and led him to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing him on the top of it, said, "Cast thine eyes eastward, and tell me what thou seest."

And Mirza answered: "I see a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it."

"The valley that thou seest," said he, "is the Vale of Misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of eternity."

"What is the reason," asked Mirza, "that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one

end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?"

"What thou seest," said the Genius, "is that portion of eternity which is called time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now," said he, "this sea that is thus bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it."

"I see a bridge," said Mirza, "standing in the midst of the tide."

"The bridge thou seest," said the Genius, "is human life; consider it attentively."

Upon a more leisurely survey of it, Mirza found that it consisted of threescore-and-ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, added to those that were entire, made up the number about a hundred. As he was counting the arches, the Genius told him that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition he now beheld it.

"But tell me further," said the Genius, "what thou discoverest on it."

Mirza answered, "I see multitudes of people passing over it, and a black cloud hang-

ing on each end of it." As he looked more attentively, he saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed underneath it, and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner toward the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together toward the ends of the arches that were entire. There were, indeed, some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

Mirza passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure and the great variety of objects which it presented. His heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at

everything that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up toward the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them; but often, when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed and down they sank. In this confusion of objects, he observed some with simitars in their hands, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped, had they not thus been forced upon them.

The Genius, seeing him indulge himself in this melancholy prospect, told him he had dwelt long enough upon it. "Take thine eyes off the bridge," said he, "and tell me if thou yet seest anything thou dost not comprehend." "What mean," said Mirza, "those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants, and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys, that perch in great numbers upon the middle

arches." "These," said the Genius, "are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life." This picture of human life suggests to us the same truth as that of the text, that we can never presume arrogantly on the future without folly. No man has any guaranty making it wise for him to boast himself of to-morrow. We have no control over future circumstances which warrant us to make any boasts even so close at hand as to-morrow. A while ago a New York physician was returning from Europe to his home in New York City. He had sent a wireless message asking his wife and four children to meet him at the wharf. The night before the steamer was to land, he had declared to a party of friends that every one should live to be at least a hundred. He was going to live to be a hundred and five, and he told how he would do it, by such and such food, by walking so many miles a day, and so on. On the next morning he was selected to propose a vote of thanks to the captain and crew, and as he was speaking he fell to the floor and was picked up a dead man. No man can boast himself safely of to-morrow.

Youth can make no greater mistake than to postpone until some future opportunity the gathering of knowledge or the preparation for a career. To defer till to-morrow, thinking there will be plenty of time, may lose the only opportunity that will ever come, and spoil your career.

A girl with a camera started out for a long drive through the beautiful foot-hills of southern California. She meant to bring back a number of pictures as souvenirs of that day's trip, yet she was anxious to secure only the best views. A picturesque adobe house, half buried by climbing vines, claimed her attention early in the day; but after a moment she relinquished her half-formed intention of photographing it. "I'm sure to find others just as pretty, and perhaps a great deal prettier," she said to herself. A little Mexican maid, quaintly drest, stared at her from the roadside, but the owner of the camera turned away her eyes. "Children are sure to be plentiful," she thought. "I'll wait." Through the day she passed scenes near at hand, in the hope that the next mile or two would bring "something a little better." The picturesque and beautiful were

on all sides, as she murmured, "Who knows what may be beyond the bend in the road?" Late in the afternoon she woke to the realization that the drive was nearly over, while she was carrying home no souvenirs of the trip. Hastily she set about repairing her mistake, but the sun was low and the pictures were a failure.

This story is a fair picture of many young lives. Some of you are there now. Beauties and joys and opportunities surround you upon every side, but these are passed over for what may be "just beyond the bend of the road." By and by, if you neglect these now, you will find that they are beyond recall.

But as we are not to boast of to-morrow, so neither should we despair of to-morrow. We are like the pendulum of a clock, and it is not a long swing with us from boastfulness to despair. But as we should not boast because we know not what a day may bring forth, so we should not despair for the same reason. A day may chase all the black clouds away, just as it may cover a clear sky. A day may bring forth some unexpected misfortune; and therefore we should be humble in prosperity. A day may bring forth some

unforeseen relief from sorrow or trial; and therefore we should hope even in the midst of our distress. One of our most common weaknesses is to become entirely engrossed and overcome by present events. Somehow we feel, in spite of all logic of the case and all the evidence of history, that present conditions will never change; so when we are prosperous we are in danger of pride and boastfulness, and when an adverse wind strikes us we become dejected and broken.

Now all this comes upon us because in such a case we are living without reference to God and His part in the world.

A beautiful incident is told by a traveler of his visit to the Cathedral of Pisa. He stood beneath its wonderful dome, spacious and symmetrical, and gazed with awe upon its beauties. Suddenly the air became instinct with melody. The great dome seemed full of harmony. The waves of the music vibrated to and fro, loudly beating against the walls, swelling into full accord like the roll of a great organ, and then dying away into soft, long-drawn, far-reaching echoes, melting into silence in the distance. It was only the guide, who, lingering behind a mo-

ment, had softly murmured a triple chord. But beneath that magic dome every sound resolves into harmony. No discord can reach the summit of that dome and live. Every voice in the building, the slamming of seats, the tramping of feet, the murmur and bustle of the crowd, are caught up, softened, harmonized, blended, and echoed back in music.

If a dome, the work of man's hands, can thus harmonize all discords, can we doubt that, under the great dome of heaven, God can make "all things work together for good to them that love him"? Every affliction, loss, grief, or sorrow which God sends, every joy and happiness, will be blended into harmony within the ever-arching dome of His grace, and be as the music of Heaven.

Our theme should suggest to us that we should never delay until to-morrow anything which it is proper for us to do to-day. We are not lords of to-morrow. We have no title to dispose of to-morrow, and we are ignorant of all the material circumstances connected with it. Even if a day should not make any great change, it is great folly to load down to-morrow with the concerns of to-day, so that it is sure to be clogged and embarrassed

with its burdens. This is especially true about the great concerns of character; to put them off until to-morrow may be to postpone them, so far as we are able to touch them, until eternity. Everything that has to do with our safety that can possibly be reached should be done to-day.

The day before the great Mount Pélee disaster the Italian bark *Orsolina*, of which Captain Leboffe was captain, was loading a cargo of sugar. Alarmed by the threatening appearance of the volcano, Captain Leboffe went to the shippers and said to them that he did not regard that roadstead as a safe place to be in, and that he had decided to stop loading and sail for home.

“But,” objected the shippers, “you can’t go yet; you haven’t got half your cargo aboard.”

“That doesn’t make any difference,” replied the captain. “I’d rather sail with half a cargo than run such a risk as a man must run here.”

The shippers assured him that Mount Pélee was not dangerous.

“I don’t know anything about Mount Pélee,” said Captain Leboffe, “but if Vesu-

vius were looking as your volcano looks this morning, I'd get out of Naples, and I'm going to get out of here."

The shippers then became angry and told him that if he sailed he would be arrested as soon as he reached home. He bade them good-by and left them. The shippers then sent two customs officers to the bark, with instructions to stay on board and prevent her from leaving. When the sails were loosed, and the crew began to heave up the anchor, the customs officers hailed a passing boat and went ashore, threatening the captain with all the penalties of the law. Twenty-four hours later the shippers and the customs officers lay dead in the ruins of St. Pierre, and the bark *Orsolina* was far at sea, on her way to France.

We should be like that wise sea-captain in regard to every conviction of duty which appeals to us to-day. If there is anything in your character and behavior which ought to be corrected, and which, at one time or another, you intend to correct, some headstrong passion you mean to subdue, some bad habit which you purpose to break, some dangerous association which you are resolved to be

clear of, but the convenient season has not come yet—let me appeal to you, as you value your eternal life, do it to-day.

Our study should emphasize the wisdom of being prepared for whatever to-morrow may bring forth. You think you are preparing by laying up money or by entrenching yourselves in certain strong fellowships, but there is another kind of preparation, infinitely more important to the stability of your happiness and peace. A well-ordered mind, a good conscience, and a cheerful submission to the will of God are far more important. You do not know what will happen to-morrow, but there is One who knows it well, and if you can look up with reverence, feeling that you have done your duty, and that whatever to-morrow brings forth it will find you employed in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with your God, then you shall reach to-morrow without fear. If you are in that attitude of mind and heart, if to-morrow bring you some unexpected good fortune, you will be ready to receive it with gratitude, temperance, and modesty; but if it bring you evil, you will be prepared to receive it with fortitude.

After all, we must build our hopes of happiness on something more solid and lasting than anything to-morrow can bring to us. We must not expect complete happiness from any temporary surroundings. Man in his most flourishing condition is much to be pitied if he is destitute of the higher and nobler hopes of immortality. Let us go back and close as we began with the "Vision of Mirza," which is fully supported by God's Word. When Mirza, broken-hearted, could bear no longer the vision of the broken bridge of life, its uncertainty and its death, the Genius bade him look beyond, to a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. He could see persons drest in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of the fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in him upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. He wished for the wings of an eagle, that he might fly

away to those happy seats; but the Genius told him that there was no passage to them except through the gates of death that he saw opening every minute upon the bridge. "The islands," said the Genius, "that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the seashore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching farther than thine eye or even thine imagination can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtues in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasure of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them. Every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O, Mirza, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence?"

THE SOURCE OF TRUE COURAGE

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.”—Prov. 28:1.

THE first vital suggestion of our theme is that there is something about sin which weakens and deteriorates a man's personality. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth,” says Solomon. A sense of wrong-doing, a consciousness that we do not deserve good, but ill, makes us weak and cowardly.

It may well be that Solomon when he wrote this striking sentence harked back in his memory to that time when Ahithophel, the great statesman of his day and the trusted friend of David, died the death of a suicide rather than face the consequences of his own treachery. I do not know a better historical illustration of our theme than this same Ahithophel.

If you were to put the duties of secretary of state, attorney-general, and private secretary all into one man, you would have

something like a conception of the relation which Ahithophel had borne to David. He was David's chief adviser. The king had the most absolute and unreserved confidence in him. The secret plans and purposes of the government were all talked over with this man, and he was like the king's other self. It was a great blow to David when he went over to Absalom's conspiracy.

We do not know exactly what Ahithophel's reasons were for betraying David. David had been good to him, and he had reached the highest position that any man could reach under the king. But he was a cunning, shrewd man, and it is quite likely that he may have hoped to manage Absalom so as to have the real power of the kingdom in his own hands. No man could do that with David. No matter who was chief counselor, David was always the real king himself. As an act of treachery, Ahithophel's conduct was of the basest sort, and when he made up his mind to cast in his lot with Absalom he mortgaged his soul to the devil. He knew he was doing wrong. He was no fool. He was a wise man, but his wise head was led into the greatest folly by his greedy, ambitious heart. The

most cunning mind often comes to disaster through a bad heart. Ahithophel knowingly betrayed his manhood, and sinned against his God, and took the devil's bribe when he turned against David and became the chief counselor of Absalom. The devil promised him a long lease of power. No doubt Absalom assured him that his place under the new government would be far more enjoyable than under the old. But Absalom was a tricky fellow. He was a vain, proud young man. His vanity was of the lightest kind. He used to have his curls weighed every year, and every belle in the town and every young dude about the court could tell you just how many ounces Absalom's curls weighed. Joined to his vanity was his desire to get on by his cunning. Anything he had to do, whether good or bad, he always sought to accomplish in some underhanded way. He never came out in the open and dealt straight blows. Absalom was a great fellow to smile. He had an oily, unctuous smile, the smile of a born politician; but no man ever could tell whether there was a feast or a dagger back of that smile. Sometimes there were both.

Now Ahithophel knew Absalom perfectly.

He had known him all his life. He knew all his escapades and his follies. He knew the deceitful character of the young fellow, and he should have had more sense than to have believed him, and he did have more sense; but the trouble was, he was ambitious and false in his own nature, and the devil persuaded him to believe himself so much shrewder than Absalom that he would be able to control him and use him as a mere puppet to further his own interests.

For a while everything went all right. Absalom did exactly as Ahithophel said. But the giddy young adventurer soon tired of this, and called in another man to criticize Ahithophel's counsel. And to make it worse, Absalom determined to follow the counsel of Hushai. Now Ahithophel, altho he did not know that Hushai was David's spy in Absalom's camp, saw at once that his counsel meant ruin to Absalom, and that this young pretender was on the eve of great disaster that would put an end to the rebellion and bring King David back again into undisputed reign. What that would mean for him, Ahithophel could easily see; even tho David's kindly heart might be willing to forgive him,

no king could overlook the base treason of which he had been guilty, and his shameful death would be certain to follow the return of David to the throne. Poor Ahithophel! The iron sank deep into his heart. He had mortgaged his honor, his manhood, his good name, his good conscience, to the devil, and he saw now that the devil was about to foreclose the mortgage, and he was without hope. He saddled his ass and rode rapidly home. He attended to such matters as he could, got him a rope, tied one end over a beam in his house, slipt a noose over his head, and hanged himself. And there they found him dead. Ahithophel bargained for that rope the day he gave the devil a mortgage on himself by sinning against God through his treachery to David.

Whenever a man begins a course of sin he mortgages himself to the devil. The mortgage may run a good while. A man may be permitted to pay an enormous amount of interest in anxiety, and pain, and disease, and shame, and remorse, while he staves off the fatal day; but some day the mortgage will be foreclosed, unless through the infinite grace of God in Jesus Christ the mortgage

may be paid off and the debtor be redeemed from the clutches of his cruel and merciless creditor.

Courage is born of the consciousness that we are right. The man who knows he is right, that his life is open and fair before God and men, has a source of strength and courage that another can not know, for we must remember that courage depends upon the quality of character and not on the quantity. There used to be an old ballad which had for its burden, "When the pigs begin to fly." One flew the other day in a Western forest. A hunter, to his dismay, heard the squeal of a pig overhead. He dropt under cover of a friendly bush and watched. His dismay was not lessened when he beheld a pig flying away with the biggest wings he ever saw in his life. To let go both barrels was the next thing, and then the explanation was easy. An eagle had stolen a pig and was making off with it. The shot killed the bird instantly. The pig was the first to hit the ground, squealing every inch of the way until he struck the earth. Then came the bird. The pig weighed forty-two pounds and had been carried half a mile by an eagle weighing only

ten pounds. One pound of eagle easily masters four pounds of pig. You see the same difference among men and woman. The men who have the eagle spirit will always dictate destiny to the porkers.

Truly great souls, who are given up to a noble cause where selfishness is lost in the earnestness and devotion with which they carry burdens for others, are always noted for their courage. Thomas F. Prendle, for thirty-five years the doorkeeper at the Executive Mansion, used frequently to accompany President Lincoln on his walks about Washington, and has many interesting things to tell of that great man, whom he believes to have been one of the bravest men the world has ever known. On one occasion Prendle was walking with the President down a flight of steps at the Navy Department, when they came suddenly upon a man who was evidently endeavoring to hide himself in a dark corner at the bottom of the staircase. Observing the stranger and fearing he meant harm to the President, Prendle endeavored to place his body in a position to protect his companion. Mr. Lincoln, however, brave and fearless as always, stepped forward and closely scrutinized

the man, who ran rapidly up the steps, and, turning squarely around when he reached the top, looked down upon the President, who did not falter, but continued to gaze sharply at him. On their return to the White House Mr. Lincoln said, quite calmly, "Prendle, do you know I received a letter last night, warning me against a man who exactly answers the description of that man we met on the steps?"

All the greatest souls have been brave and courageous. Courage may be cultivated, but not in any frivolous way. It can only be developed by becoming large in soul through realizing that our lives are in the hands of God and through the consciousness that our conduct is pleasing to Him.

Noblest courage is always born of righteousness, which has its roots in a sincere faith. At the height of the Boxer trouble a leading merchant came to one of the missionaries with the request to be baptized and received into the Church at once. The missionary replied: "Had you not better wait a little, until this storm of persecution has blown over? A public profession just now might endanger you." "No," said he, "I don't want to wait.

It is this very thing that leads me to desire to be a Christian. I have seen your Christians go down into the darkness of a horrible death triumphantly, and it is the fact that their religion sustains them that leads me to desire to be a Christian now." It is not surprizing to learn that a man with such convictions and courage became an intensely earnest and faithful Christian.

There is no loss so great in its effect upon the integrity and courage of the character as a loss of a restful faith in God and in His personal care over our lives. The poet has described it well when he tells how—

Upon the white sea sand
 There sat a pilgrim band,
 Telling the losses that their lives had known.

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There were some who mourned their youth
 With a most tender ruth.

.

Some talked of vanished gold,
 Some of proud honors told,
 Some spoke of friends who were their friends no
 more.

And one of a green grave
Far away beyond the wave.

.

But when their tales were done,
There spoke among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free:
Sad losses ye have met,
But mine are sadder yet,
For the believing heart has gone from me.
"Then alas," those pilgrims said,
"For the living and the dead,
For life's deep shadows and the heavy cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea;
But, howe'er it came to thee,
Thine, brother, is life's last and sorest loss,
For the believing heart has gone from thee—
Ah! the believing heart has gone from thee!"

The man who is to keep himself brave and strong for the work of life must hold himself in the right attitude toward those things that make for righteousness. When James A. Garfield was a boy at Williams College, he climbed up Mount Greylock one day with a number of companions, and passed the night on the mountain-top. Seated around the camp-fire, they sang college songs and told stories all the evening. As they were about

to lie down for the night, young Garfield took a Testament out of his pocket and said: "Boys, it's my custom to read a chapter in the Bible and have a prayer before going to bed. Shall we have it together?" And they did. It was Garfield's faithfulness in all his duties and obligations that won for him his great success and a nation's admiration.

And if I speak to any here who have been living in the wrong attitude toward God, and toward true and holy things, I wish I could make you feel how readily that could all be changed if with true repentance and faith you would seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ and put yourself where you could feel God's protecting love and care and guaranty for your career. That change of heart would change your very face and glorify your countenance.

I went on one occasion to preach a reopening sermon in a church where I had formerly been pastor. During all my pastorate in that church a man whose family belonged to the church, and who on occasions attended the services himself, resisted all efforts that could be brought to bear upon him to lead him into the Christian life. He was living

in sin, and it made his heart hard and cold, until his face was hard and repellent. All my memory of the man during those years is the memory of the bold, hard, repellent face of sin. I had heard that since I had gone away he had been converted, and had become an active Christian; but a long time had elapsed since my hearing it, and it had passed out of my mind. So when I stood before the congregation to preach that night, and my eye lit on this man's face, I almost stopt my sermon in astonishment to cry out and ask what had happened to him. Instead of the old cynical look on his face, it was a face illuminated, eyes full of keen and loving interest, the whole man sensitive and alive to the things of God, and then suddenly I remembered what I had heard, that the man had been converted. That explained it all. At the close of the sermon, when he came up and took me by the hand with the great glad tears standing in his eyes, I felt that indeed here was a heart that had been touched with the flame from the heavenly fire. Are there not among you some hearts that need to be divinely lit? Why live in coldness and darkness when all the warmth and light of gen-

erous affection and hope and peace may be yours?

There is an interesting little touch in the story of the betrayal of Jesus Christ which tells how, on that night, when Judas kissed his Lord into the hands of his enemies for thirty pieces of silver, the evening air became very cool and chill, and the soldiers who guarded Jesus made "a fire of coals," and stood about it, warming themselves. Then it was that Peter went and crouched down over the fire in company with the enemies of his Master, and listened to their bitter sneers about his Lord. A little after, when they began to question him, he began that series of denials of Jesus. He would not have done it if he had not first warmed himself at the enemy's fire. There is a good lesson in it for us. Many Christians go on bravely, as did Peter, so long as they stick close to the Church, and to Christian fellowship. So long as they read God's Word and daily hold communion with Christ in prayer they are ready to draw their swords for Christ anywhere; but when in an evil hour they crouch down to warm themselves at the devil's fire in some questionable amusement,

or social, or business undertaking that brings them where they must hear in silence sneer and criticism and insult hurled at their divine Lord, their hearts weaken, and they deny the Lord who died to redeem them. Oh, my friends, never warm your hands at the devil's fire.

THE END

